MY GARDEN OF the RED RED ROSE

by J. R. AITKEN

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MY GARDEN OF THE RED, RED ROSE

IN THE GARDEN OF THE RED ROSES

MY GARDEN OF THE RED, RED ROSE

BY

J. R. AITKEN

AUTHOR OF "IN A CITY GARDEN," "THE CHRIST OF THE MEN OF ART," "LOVE IN ITS TENDERNESS," "THE SINS OF A SAINT"

EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR BY
FRED. TAYLOR

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TO

MY OLD FRIENDS

"BISMARCK" AND "DANTE"

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FRED. TAYLOR

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" My love is like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
My love is like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune."

CHAPTER ONE

MY GARDEN OF THE RED, RED ROSE

A description of My Garden, with its contents, and with a note on my feelings as I walked and worked in it before one came who made it for me a Garden of Love.

WANTING IS—WHAT?

"Wanting is—what?
Summer redundant,
Blueness abundant,
—Where is the blot?
Beamy the world, yet a blank all the same,
Framework which waits for a picture to frame:
What of the leafage, what of the flower?
Roses embowering with nought they embower!
Come then, complete incompletion, O comer,
Pant through the blueness, perfect the summer!
Breathe but one breath
Rose-beauty above,
And all that was death
Grows life, grows love,
Grows love!"

ROBERT BROWNING.

MY GARDEN OF THE RED, RED ROSE BY J. R. AITKEN CHAPTER ONE

MY GARDEN OF THE Red, Red Rose is dearer to me than heart can tell. Dear for its own sake, and fragrant with many joyous memories, not even the tragedy that darkened our later days can rob it of my love. Some things in life, all more or less, enter the very blood of us, weave themselves into our thoughts and feelings, give us prayers and lifting hopes, make for us laughter or tears, and chief among these is My Garden. Next to my love of God and of her who is the dearest earth holds for me, my work and the hills of home, is my love of My Garden of the Red, Red Rose.

It is almost impossible now, after the lapse of years, to think I was not born there. Yet we were once strangers. All unknown to me, My Garden was under God's sky, giving its beauty and joy to

other lives, and casting its fragrance on the breeze. It was a stranger to me, and I knew not where to look for my love. In the weft of the after-years it was woven of God for me, and I knew it not. A child of a northern sea, cradled among the hills, waking and going to sleep to the music of the waters of the Kyles, I had no thought of a southern flower. Educated in a great city, and bitten by its fever and fret, I looked out of my window, east and west, north and south, and knew not where God would cast my shoe. But, one day, He came to me, bound my eyes so that I could not see what He was doing, smote me in the dark to the wounding of my soul, then touched me with a gentle Hand and led me to My Garden of the Red, Red Rose. Not straight did He lead me, but a long way round, and over thousands of weary miles, full a thousand days. Often I thought that He was blundering, did not know the way, and that

RED, RED ROSE

Life held no "Garden" for me. Yet the Hand was always near me in the dark, and led me, blindfolded though I was, to My Garden of the Red, Red Rose. Then, we who were strangers became friends, and My Garden became dear.

God swings His golden censers in the sun, and every season has its opulence. Not one Garden of Life is missed, and not one day is without wealth. We get far more than we give, and into our life are crowded countless treasures. Many hours and much labour I gave to My Garden, but My Garden and God gave much more to me, much beyond my toil. I planted here and sowed there, made many changes, carried out a deep-thought scheme of great improvements; but My Garden improved me more than I My Garden, and gave me back a hundredfold more than I spent on it. Nature is prodigal with her wealth. She gives away with lavish hand, and is never short

in her "change." Flower and fruit, fragrance and song, love and life, she gave me in My Garden of the Red, Red Rose. I asked for a song and she gave me a symphony, for blossom and she gave me fruit, for a coin and she gave me gold. That is her royal way. Never fickle, never mean, she is generous at every turn, and gives far more than she receives. So graciously and so quietly, without much ado or much parade in doing it, the white angels of God do His bidding, and fill our laps with joy. It were ungracious not to acknowledge this, and I wish to say to the Angel of My Garden, "Thou hast given me far more than I have given thee." For truly, My Garden has brought me more than I have given it, and filled my life with countless treasure.

Where is My Garden of the Red, Red Rose? Not far from Stratford-on-Avon, in a tiny village you would look for in vain on the map, and ride past, unnotic-

ed, as you sweep along the Evesham road. On the crest of the hill it lies, overlooking the Valley and nestling among fruit-trees. The soil is rich and loamy, and the art of gardening is so well known throughout the Vale that men call it "The Garden of England." From early spring till late autumn the Valley laughs for greatness of joy, gladdening the heart of man with its beauty and its growth. Every garden in the Valley is a picture in the spring, and every fruit-tree in the land "a thing of beauty." In the autumn, the Valley spreads her golden store before the eyes of God and man, and the unseen angels clap their hands in veritude of joy. On the crest of the hill, overlooking all, and nestling among its own fruit-trees, is My Garden of the Red, Red Rose. Other gardens there are in that fair countryside bigger and better, perhaps, than mine, but none so fair to me, and none so dear. Other "gardeners"

there are who know the heart of Nature, and understand her thoughts, and wait upon her hand and foot, but none who love her more, and none who hold her more in awe. Not fit to be named beside the great garden of the Marquis, or the broad acres of the Hall, or the cultured nook of my old friends "Bismarck" and "Dante," it is fairer to me than all, and dearer to me than any. In its shade I have known life and death, laughter and tears, have seen God and looked into the face of the Beyond.

I came to it, for the first time, in the spring of the year. The hedgerows were radiant with the fresh green of their morning, and the blossom was on the crabs that deck the highways. Mile upon mile, as we drove along, the ivy was growing round the roots of the hawthorns and making many a bank by the roadside "a joy for ever." Every orchard was a mass of fruit-bloom, apple and

plum, cherry and pear. Never before had I seen such a succession of blossom, and never such a dream fulfilled of the magnificence and glory of flowering trees. As the days went by, the fruit formed, and the confetti fell. And, in the autumn, every garden in the land, every orchard in the Valley, and thousands of acres of fields, had fruit enough and to spare. Millions of fruit-trees throughout the Valley make it glorious in the spring. Tens of thousands of tons of fruit in the autumn make it still more glorious for the men whose joy it is to handle that golden merchandise. In the spring, through a sea of blossom, I came to My Garden of the Red, Red Rose. In it, also, the fruit-trees were blooming, pear and plum, apple and cherry. I loved it at first sight, love it still, and shall love it to the end. "What," thought I, "would not the crowded toilers of the great cities give for this? And what just to stand under

one of my plum-trees in the autumn of the year?"

My deepest impression, after the glory of flowering fruit, was the quietness of the garden. Far from the noise of the crowded city, here was a vale of rest. After the bruising of the Dark Providence, here was an arbor of quietness. After the long journey, a haven of peace. I walked through My Garden and felt the quietness in my soul. I sat on the lawn and drank in the stillness of the scene. I listened, and all I could hear was the humming of the bees and the under-song of the birds. Two fields off a lark was singing in the blue, beating its wing against the golden bars of heaven. Two orchards off a blackbird was piping its rich notes among the blossom. What more restful than the distant song of the lark on a spring morning? What more luscious than the mellow notes of a blackbird at the evensong?

Morning and evening I heard them, them and a host of their kindred, singing their songs of joy. And beneath all their music, this great quietness, "the peace of God that passeth all understanding." It is the healing stillness of Nature, the antidote of the Great Mother for the fever and fret of life. I loved it when first I came to My Garden. I love it still. And, often as I come back from the great city to My Garden of the Red, Red Rose, it is the cup the Angel of The Garden gives me. I drink it, and am whole again.

My city friends, when they visited me, wondered how I could stand the silence of My Garden. They would look at me awhile, and then feel their way like this—"Don't you, don't you . . . . find it—awfully quiet? Isn't it, eh—a bit dull? What in all the earth do you do in winter?" Then would I tell them the story of the three monks: Once upon a time, three

monks took upon themselves a vow of perpetual silence. They left the cloister and went into the wilderness. And, when they had spent a year in silence, No. 1 turned round and said, "It is quiet, isn't it?" And the others answered not one word. But, when the second year of silence had gone, No. 2 turned round, and said, "It is, isn't it?" And the other answered not one word. But, when the third anniversary of their vow came round, No. 3 turned and said, "Look you here, you fellows! If you're going to talk so much, I'm going to clear out of this!" Then understood my city friends that I, too, loved the silence.

The days lengthened, and summer came. Day by day I walked and worked in My Garden, till every nook and corner became known to me, and every flower, and shrub, and tree kissed my life with joy. What was in My Garden of the Red, Red Rose? Let me tell you. I have told

you of the blossom of my fruit-trees, and of the healing silence, and the under-song of birds. I am no lover of catalogues, and can only speak of things I love. On the northern gable of the house was a great Virginian creeper, high as the eaves where the sparrows built their nests. On the western walls were a lovely Maréchal Niel rose and a fine luxurious clematis. On the southern gables, fruit-trees, plum and pear: you could lean out of your bedroom window and pick the luscious fruit. On the eastern walls, ivy green. Over the low hawthorn hedge there, open fields, and, beyond, the broad valley stretching away to the Cotswold Hills. In front of the house, to the west, the lawn, and, over the low hawthorn hedge there, open fields again, the Evesham Road and a great row of fine beeches. To the south, fruit-trees, apples, pears, damson, green-gage, Victoria, Pershore plums, and, over the holly hedge

there, Old John's cottage and garden. To the north, the carriage drive, a patch of lawn, a few flowers, the shrubbery, and, beyond, the sanctuary of God. Behind the house, eastward was the garden, and, away to the north, in the shelter of the church, the bed where the red roses grew. This bit of geography to help you see the lie of My Garden of the Red, Red Rose. Not ideal, but idyllic. Not spacious, to make life a burden and exact too much toil, but a coign of vantage from which to see the sun leap over the Cotswolds, run over the southern sky, and pass, in glory of crimson and gold, into the mystic land beyond the golden beeches. In the centre of my world, the Garden, and, over it, from early morn till evensong, the sun. So that, I could bask in it the whole day long if I would, or shelter from its heat when the fire-fiends drove the chariot of Sol.

RED, RED ROSE

What was in My Garden of the Red, Red Rose? Good humour and joy, white purity and peace, silence and song, prayer and aspiration, but not love, not love as yet. I lay beneath my gold laburnum tree, watched it break into opulence, and spend its wealth on every passer-by, yet knew that My Garden was poor. I stood beside my white lilacs, and saw them put on their bridal robes and tremble at the altar of their God, and felt that My Garden was bare. I sat by the sweetbriars, and drank of their fragrance while the sunshine drew their pleasant odours and the soft winds carried them to my nostrils, yet saw that my goblet was not full. I gazed on a field of beans in flower (what pleasanter scent is there than the fragrant smell of a field of beans in the summer sun?) and knew there was one thing lacking. I wandered by a bank of violets, kissed of the sweet south, and rode on the wings of the wind

far as the flames of Dawn leap to their golden setting, yet felt that the world was bare. I came to a bed of gillyflowers, red and yellow, ruddy and brown, and smiled to see their wonderful wealth of hue and wealth of bloom, and knew that my heart was not full. I worked among my white narcissi, under the apple-trees, and cleansed my life with their spotless purity, yet felt that my soul was not satisfied. I came to the place where the red, red roses grew, and feasted my eyes on their beauty, and drank deeply of their fragrance, and thanked God that He had brought me to My Garden, yet knew it would not be complete till I found one flower more, and saw it growing in My Garden of the Red, Red Rose.

What was in My Garden of the Red, Red Rose? Everything but love. Every flower that I wanted was there, except that. Every fruit that my heart desired, except the fruit of love. Bees and butter-

flies flew all over My Garden, and seemed to make it still more beautiful with their music and daintiness. I watched the butterflies flutter and hover in their erratic flight till I knew them every one, and called them my friends. I saw the birds sometimes swoop down on them, like hawks, and watched countless tragedies of the air as the hunted butterflies dived and zigzagged for their lives. I stood by the Oriental poppies, and watched the bees suck the honey from the flowers and dust their coats with pollen. I listened to the soothing drone of the bumble bees on a summer day, and followed them all over the garden, the great big wondrous fellows, and wondered when love would come to me. I stood for hours, one summer day, watching a pair of starlings feed their young, and became so enamoured of their eagerness and toil that I came, again and again, all through that glorious month of June, till the young

birds took to the wing. Their worthy sires had built their nest in the hollow of an old oak-tree, high above the ground, and I watched, with beating heart, lest another tragedy of the air should take place before my eyes. The young birds stretched their wings, awhile, tried their strength standing on the edge of the hollow, lingered a day or two afraid to let go, took wing at last, and lighted among the pansies at my feet. They were not afraid of me, seemed to know me and count me their friend.

"Ah, little birds," thought I, "would that I, too, had young, children of mine playing in the garden!"

All the birds knew me. I lay so still on the lawn, stood so quietly under the fruit-trees, sat so long by the red, red roses, that they took me for one of their own, and would fly to me or flutter round me as I sat or stood or lay in My Garden of the Red, Red Rose. One robin red-

breast made me his chum, sat on my shoe, leapt on my body as I lay on the lawn, and picked food from my hand. I could not put a spade into the ground, or turn over a trowel of soil, but my robin redbreast was down to see what treasure there was for him. A vicious, jealous little fellow he was, though he gave me many hours of pleasant friendship. A cruel heart he had, capable of murder, but he loved me and showed me only what was good.

"Ah, little bird," thought I, "I, too, could show some good to one who loved me!"

"God be thanked the meanest of his creatures
Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with,
One to show a woman when he loves her!"

Six months long was I thus, walking among my flowers, talking to the birds and bees, and knew that one thing was

wanting. Six months long, till, one day,
I said in my soul:

" I must marry a wife—or buy a dog!
I am lonely!"

But, I did not buy a dog.

CHAPTER TWO

THE OLD MANSE GARDEN

The story of an Old Manse Garden in which a large family were well and truly brought up, and round which many pleasant memories gather, especially in my heart and in the life of one who was cradled there, under the apple-trees.

" Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive;
But to be young was very heaven."

WORDSWORTH.

CHAPTER TWO
THE OLD MANSE GARDEN

EVERYTHING I HAD BUT love. And I wanted love. Every flower my heart desired in My Garden of the Red, Red Rose, but one red Passion Flower. And I wanted that. And I knew not where to find it. Yet, all the time, it was growing, fine and good, in an Old Manse Garden.

In an old-world town in the north of Buckinghamshire, famed for its lace and for a poet, and, still more to me, for its kind hearts, is the Old Manse Garden of which I write. Situate on the banks of the lily-growing Ouse as it wends its way to the sea, the town is as slow as the river and its life as quiet as the waters of the stream. A quiet, peaceful, little country town, with one long wide street from the railway to the bridges, and a spacious square where the inn and the shops are, and where comfortable tradesmen ply their business as their fathers

did before them. Half way up the long, broad street is the manse, and, behind it, the garden. Here the Man of God lived and laboured, long and well, helped by a brave and good woman, and cheered by children eight. And here grew my tall Passion Flower.

Let me sketch for you the Old Manse and Garden. I know every nook and corner of it, though one by my side knows it far better than I and keeps telling me things about it redolent with happy hours as I dip my pen and write. An old red-tiled house facing a quiet street, its grey stones covered with lichen, its red tiles green with age. Two stories high, with attics above, it has ten low-ceilinged rooms, and winding passages, and innumerable cupboards, every one dear to the heart of the brave busy mother. Between the gables of the manse and the house adjoining (a manse, also), on the roof, was a great space covered with

A CORNER OF THE OLD FRANSE GARDEN

lead, to which the daring children climbed to tell each other stories and plan the great exploits of youth. They tore up the lead once to make bullets, with the result that, when the first rain came, the minister next door came tearing into the study, in a towering rage.

"It's too bad, Mr Allen, too bad! The rain's coming pouring into my room and wetting all my sermons!"

"Humph!" was the swift reply. "They're dry enough, and can stand some wetting!"

Behind this rendezvous was an old barn, the scene of many a joyous venture, and sacred as the place where my Passion Flower retired to weep when life grew hard in the garden or childish hopes were dashed to tears. Between the manse and the barn was a flight of stone steps, uncovered from wind or sun, leading up to the play-room on the left and the upper barn on the right. Once

up this flight of steps it was an easy matter for the children to climb on to the barn roof, from that to their neighbour's higher barn, and from that to their story-telling den, between the gables of the two manses. Here my fearless Lady climbed one day, with the gold-haired Winifred on her back (to think of it now makes her tremble), and here, from the upper barn, they dropped my Lord Arthur in a bucket into the garden below. The Angel who Guards the Children must have watched over them, for they are alive and well to this day.

Behind the house and the barn was the garden. A large strip of ground, well stocked with flowers, fruit, and vegetables, it was the playground of the eight and of a host of friends. Once admitted to the charmed circle, a troop of boys were welcome to the garden, and came and went, most days—Allens, Graves, Chandlers, Hortons. There were many

things to interest them in the Old Manse Garden. There was the grass-plot behind the barn, on the left, where they played tip-cat and rounders. By it, was the home of many a grunter; here, when my Lord Bacon came to strength, Sydney Oliver, the second of the noble eight, would ride him round and round the sty, cheered by a crowd of admirers.

On the right, opposite the grass-plot, were flower-beds belonging to various members of the family. Here grew snapdragons, gillyflowers on wall and beds, great clumps of lavender, a succession of sweet-smelling violets against the sunny wall, a pale-yellow evening primrose that opened its flowers at sunset and filled the twilight with delightful fragrance, a mass of bright red pæonias, a host of tulips and other flowers loved by the eight. Round the beds they played Skim Dick (a game of their own invention) and Double Duck (a game known

the whole country through).

By the flower-beds were the rabbit hutches, the swing, and two great fir-trees to which, in mad frolic, one day the Graves' boys tied all the children up in a crate, then cut the ropes, and laughed to see them fall. It was great fun to the Graves' boys: but, happily, the Angel who Guards the Children saved them from their folly. The rabbit hutches were very big, three stories high, and sheltered many a succession of lovely bunnies. Their great terror was Black Peter (of whom more anon) the cat. Tales are told to this day of how Black Peter sat under the hutches, made a hole through the floor, and dragged down a litter of bunnies, one at a time, for his gladdening. Night after night, he seized one, and ate it, far from the hutch. Morning after morning, the children came to find one more amissing, till, at last, they caught the ruffian at the task. They wept, and

vowed death to Black Peter, but the villain escaped.

To Black Peter, also, belonged the ignominy of having killed one of the greatest of all the pet bunnies, Blind Jummie. When he was young, the eyes of Jummie were bad, and the children used to take him indoors and wash his eyes with milk. But the great dark came on, and Jummie lost sight of God's world. Pitying his blindness, the children made much of him. "Jummie, Jummie!" they cried, and Blind Jummie followed them all over the manse and garden. Thus, many happy days for Jummie in his darkness, till, one day, Black Peter jumped on his back, and killed him. They caught Black Peter this time, beat him, locked him in a dark cupboard, and peeped in at him (themselves not a little frightened) in his misery. Then they took Blind Jummie, buried him in the garden, planted flowers over his grave, and wept copi-

ous tears. The sorrows of children are sacred: Jummie though "dead" yet "speaketh."

Beyond the grass-plot, on the left, was the vegetable garden, with great rows of potatoes, carrots, beans, peas, mint, thyme, and sage, where the bees used to hum by the hour. All along the wall here was a bank of snowdrops, primroses, and violets. One can smell them now and feel again the mystery of life. Beyond these, again, were the nut-trees, overhanging the low stone wall, where the children gathered, and played, and talked, planning their wars and picnics, and stripping the nut-trees of their golden cobs. Still farther west was a waste patch of land where the twitch fires smoked. Round these the children often sat in the twilight roasting potatoes and eating them with the huge relish of youth. The gardener's name was Robinson, but "Job" was the nickname given him

by the bairns. His temper was slightly spoiled by rheumatism and lumbago, and once, when some of his tools went amissing, he declared, "It would take the patience o' Job to put up alonga all you children." And, from that day, he was called "Job": because they could not give him the patience they gave him the name.

Beyond the fir-trees, on the right, was a great strawberry-bed, the scene of many a joyous feast in early days and the battle-ground of many a moral struggle when conscience began to wake. By these were gooseberry-bushes and currant-trees galore. The garden here was enclosed by a lovely hedge of sweet-smelling elder, French May, box, snowberry, and other pleasant shrubs. In this hedge was a gap large enough to admit the body of a boy. To the naked eye it might show in what friendly relations the two families lived, but to the lady next door it was a great grief.

"Once again I have tied these twigs together," she would say to the manse children, "and I cannot understand this gap. You can always be admitted by the front door, or Robert will unbar the back gate. But, do permit my hedge to resume its natural proportions!"

She always spoke in a lofty, grandiloquent way, though naturally fond of the children and frequently handing them handfuls of apples across the hedge. She was tall and dignified, never on any occasion bent her back, and hated language that was not precise. They called her clever stepson "Geyser."

"You may call him Robert," she remonstrated, "or Chandler, or even Bob, though I dislike it, but Geyser he shall not be called!"

But Geyser he was called to the end.

Beyond the strawberry-bed, among the raspberry and currant bushes, was a very large apple-tree. Its French pip-

pins ripened quickly, turning a lovely light gold all at once. Long before the gold deepened, old sticks and broom-heads would be found underneath the tree : these were the weapons by which the apples were brought to the ground to cheer the children's hunger. Just over the wall, in the next garden, was a great pear-tree, very high and very difficult to reach ; but here, also, the pears disappeared in season, in a like mysterious way. Here was my true love cradled, under the apple-trees, sung to sleep by the singing birds. Here did she wake to dream her dreams and grow in her love of life. Sun and wind, leaf and blossom, fruit and sky, no wonder that she loves them.

At the top of the garden was a high stone wall covered with most luxuriant ivy. It was so thick, broad, and high, that the children could climb up and hide among the ivy leaves. From the top of

the wall they could obtain a view of three old-world gardens on either side, and one of their chief delights was to watch from the ivy tower old Mr Barnes, in very baggy trousers and shirt sleeves, working with his bees. As he worked, he made music like the bees, and kept "bumming" away like a big bumble-bee, hour after hour, to the children's huge delight. On either side of the garden, by the ivy wall, were Chandler's and Horton's second barns, the scenes of many a cabbage-stalk war, compared with which all modern forms of amusement seem tame.

In the centre of the ivy wall was the old garden gate, leading to the outer world. It was often barricaded against the Chandler and Horton boys, but, in time of peace, it was open to all the world. Frequently, at twilight, the dark-haired Gertrude would open the old gate and run up and down the lane on the outer

side of the ivy wall. Frightened to be alone, yet swelling inside with dreams of life, she thought of the great world where one could do as one liked and need not come in when called. A freedom-loving child, she flew up and down the ivy lane, panting for liberty. With open arms, she ran to me. With glowing face, called to me. With passionate heart, flew to meet me. But I was far away.

Ah, little bird, had I known I would have flown with swift wing to meet you. Had I seen, I would have run with eager feet to the Old Manse Garden.

CHAPTER THREE

THE MEN OF THE OLD MANSE GARDEN

In which I sketch for you a few of the men and women who passed through the Old Manse Garden, and shaped the life of my Passion Flower.

"Ah! see, whoso fayre thing dost faine to see
In springing flowre the image of thy day,
Ah! see the virgin Rose, how sweetly shee
Doth first peepe forth with bashful modestee
That fairer seemes the lesse ye see her may."

SPENSER.

III. THE MEN OF THE OLD MANSE GARDEN

IT IS SWEET TO BE CRADled under the apple-trees, and it is one of life's priceless boons to spend one's tenderest years in an old-world garden. It is great to grow in grace and in stature among the flowers, and it is good beyond all telling to wake to the dream and passion of life with the rustle of the wind among the trees. So did my true love wake. I pity always the town child who knows no apple-trees, the town girl who knows no spacious places. In the Old Manse Garden my love awaked to the beauty and mystery of life, the wonder and glory of earth. I have sketched it for you that you may love it, and that you may understand how she loves sun and rain, wind and sky, liberty and life.

Let me sketch for you, also, the men and women whose feet passed through the Old Manse Garden and hallowed it for ever. Chief is the Man of God, a man

of studious habits, whose quiet thoughtful words are remembered to this day. With spotless linen front, long, silky flowing beard, and hands that were never soiled, he was a picture of stateliness and saintly dignity. No one ever dreamed of taking liberties with him, though it is on record that the chatty little barber called one evening anxious to sell him a goat.

"What in the world should I do with a goat, Mantle?"

"Put it on the study table, sir, and milk it!" was the witty reply.

Sometimes the Man of God would walk in the garden, with his spotless linen and white hands, and superintend the business of the hour; and it chanced, on such a day, that Moggie Wixon was busy with the task of tarring the roof of the pig-sty. Moggie was an artist with a squeaky voice, and those who understand the art of tarring will know that

there comes a moment when the tar spread over the roof needs to be covered quickly with ashes. Moggie was working on the top of the roof, had not supplied himself with quite enough ashes, and was afraid that his art would be put to shame. "Hi!" he squeaked to the Man of God. "Nip and fetch me a few of them cinders!" And the man with the spotless hands and immaculate front ran to do his bidding.

Occasionally, very occasionally, he took it into his head to do some gardening himself, though not created for such lowly tasks. Then was he merry with his children.

"Now, Master Oliver, you hold the rake! Now, Gertrude Emma Mary, you take the seed! Now, my boy" (the eldest was always "my boy"), "you hold the spade! Now, Master Pussy (Percy) Davies, you bring the water-can!"

Then one would dig, one rake, and

the Man of God himself sow the seed, and survey his work with great satisfaction.

"There, now, we have set the carrot seed!"

Not often did he bend to the lowly tasks of the garden, but he was a fearless man, loved Nature as he loved God, and sought to inspire in his children love of God's handiwork and reverence for Nature in all her moods. Often when it thundered, he would come for his children, take their hands, and lead them to the garden door to watch the lightning flash over the low-lying hills. Standing by the door, he would place his hand on their heads when the thunder clapped, and teach them not to be afraid.

Only once is he remembered to have taken his children for a walk, though he loved them dearly. With deep understanding of human nature, he bought a big bag of oranges. They set out for

Warrington spinneys to pick primroses, but, a mile on the way, rain came on in torrents. Then the Man of God and his children (his little daughter under his coat-tail) crept under a hedge, ate their oranges, and waited till a grocer's cart came along and carried them home.

Of his children, the first four, Herbert, Gertrude, Sidney, and Percy, formed a company by themselves. He had a very tender love for his one little wondering girl, used to call her his "little walking-stick" as he walked up the garden with his hand on her black tresses. A silent man, he had little to say to her, but wished, for her sake, that she should have a little sister, and was disappointed when two other boys came, Mortimer and Arthur.

"Why don't you get me a little sister, father?" his brown-eyed Gertrude kept asking, till, one day, he came home to her quite jubilant.

"Gertrude Emma Mary, I've bought you a little sister, at last!"

Her face flushed with joy.

"When will she come, father?"

"About five o'clock to-night, my dear! Now, what shall we name her?"

She took a long time to decide, and then crept shyly up to him:

"I think I'll call her Lily."

The hours seemed long till five o'clock, but, punctually at five, a man came into the garden with a sack on his back.

"Here's your little sister, my child, cried the Man of God smiling, as a little white pig ran out of the sack.

Late that night, his little dark-haired daughter was found in the barn, having wept herself ill. It was sad enough to lose Blind Jummie, but this bitter disappointment was the darkest sorrow of her childhood years. She never laughs at the sorrows of childhood; for the bitterness of those dark hours in the barn

are still present with her, the hopelessness of life when her heart was robbed of its promised joy.

One golden September, however, the Man of God walked softly before his Maker. His brave and cheerful help-meet lay in danger of her life. For weeks the house had been stilled, and Bert, the eldest, had done his utmost to quieten the games of the garden and keep the young ones good. Gertrude slept in a room with her father, and was very much surprised to be awakened one night with hilarious laughter. Peeping up from her bed, she saw her father sitting in his shirt-sleeves. He slowly unbuttoned one brace, and flung it over his shoulder on to the bed.

"This is a capital joke," he kept saying; "a capital joke!" and filled the room with laughter.

Early next morning he woke the child again.

"What would you say, my dear, if I told you that you had a little sister?"

"I shouldn't believe you," came the bitter reply.

"Run and look in your mother's bed," he answered.

She ran, and, as she ran, the kind old nurse put into her arms the long-wished-for sister, rosy, fat, and big. There was no doubt this time, and the joy of the manse was great.

Two years after Ethel came, Nature laughed again, and the gold-haired Winifred was born. In her gold hair, blue eyes, and merry ways the Man of God seemed to take more pleasure than in all the rest. Through his long illness she was a little sunbeam to him, and he found joy in her to the last.

A true and good man, he fought a very valiant fight, and passed "breast and back as either should be." He had set his heart on building a new sanctuary

for his Lord, and worked against many obstacles to the end. On Easter Monday he organised a big Sale to bring in the last thousand. Near the end of the Sale he came up to Gertrude and asked her to take him home. And leaning upon his "little walking-stick," now grown big and strong, he went home for the last time. An hour later his brave, fond helpmeet arrived.

"Well, my dear," she cried, "you'll be pleased to hear we've got the last pound."

Sitting on the side of the bed, the good man quietly answered, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace," lay down, and went to sleep.

Two days later he passed, gently and peacefully, into the Eternal Presence.

The brave and busy helpmeet of the Man of God took a place all by herself in the quiet little town. Her kind heart made her the friend of everybody in

trouble and in joy. She was sent for by everyone in sickness, and consulted by young and old on matters of life and death. Never too busy to go, she was at the call of everyone. Never too tired to sit through the night, and never afraid to help in any operation, she was the tried friend of doctor and patient alike. No baby was considered respectable unless ushered in in her presence. No soul was sure of heaven unless she ministered to it at the last. Her boys used to say that she never cared for anyone unless she had poulticed them or given them medicine. From early morning till late at night her hands and her brain wrought for the good of others. If you would see her at her best you must rise very early and watch her in the garden. With an old garden hat tied tightly under her chin, she would tend her flowers, or pick her raspberries, before the birds were astir to pick them for her. A lover of flowers,

she tended them carefully; and a good housewife, she loved to pick her fruit and vegetables while the dew was still upon them. She had always a basket of red currants, or strawberries, or raspberries to send to someone less favoured, and always a bunch of old garden flowers, with a big bit of sweetbriar, to send to the sick. With all her care for human kind, she loved her pig, and tended it almost as fondly as her flowers. Every day, after dinner, she would go up the garden with a little stick and a glass of peas.

"Tiggie, tiggie, come and tell the mistress! Tiggie, tiggie!" so tenderly; answered with happy grunts and grumbles from the pig.

With the stick she scratched his back while she fed him with the peas, murmuring:

"Tiggie, tiggie!"

She always wept when the pig was killed, but took a huge joy in the weight

of her hams and the size of her chines when her tears were dry.

"What do you do with yourself all day, Mrs Allen?" asked an office-bearer once.

"My word," she answered, "I would like to tie you to my apron strings for a week!"

This, indeed, would have been a stirring experience for any son of man.

Around these two hovered a number of kindly souls, dear to memory. There was Old Sally, the friend of all the children and the cat. Every morning, at eleven, Black Peter sat waiting for her at the garden gate.

"Now, Sally, it's no good that cat telling you it wants food," cries the mistress. "For it doesn't."

"It ain't food the cat wants, mam," answers Sally. "It's sympathy."

She was an old bent body, paralysed in her right arm, but she nursed every baby in the manse and watched over

them faithfully and well. Her mother had kept a dame school, and Old Sally had a marvellous memory for poetry and "bits." Every Sunday night she came to mind the manse while maids and mother were at church. The children of the manse all gathered round her while she warmed the baby's toes and told it "This little piggie went to market." Then two-years-old would come on her knee, when baby was in bed, and Sally would tell it "I love little pussy" over and over again. Four-years-old would get "How doth the little busy bee improve each shining hour." Six-years-old, "This night I lay me down to sleep." To the older children she would tell many cunning "bits," one of her favourite "bits" being

"Birds in their little nests agree,
And 'tis a shameful sight
When children of one family
Fall out and chide and fight."

This was said always when feeling

was running high, and had a marvellously subduing effect.

Not one of the children would miss their turn on Old Sally's knee. Till they were old, well into their teens, they came and took their turn, and remember to this day the accents of that kindly voice.

Sometimes in the garden you would hear the tap of a stick. This was Blind Billy coming down the manse path. He was a blind musician, tuned pianos, and sang in public-houses; but he started many a young artist on his career and added much to the joy of that countryside. Sometimes you would see at the garden gate an upright old gentleman with massive white hair and flowing beard. This was Mr Britton, the Sunday-school superintendent, a brave old soldier, as upright in soul as in body, a great stickler for law and order, genial withal, and very much loved of the children. Or a handsome old gentleman,

clean-shaven, and of noble build, would pass through the gate. This was Old Dad Hollingshead, a pillar of the Church and clever inventor. He did not trouble his head about theology, but gloried in the doctrines of love and kindness. Famed among his friends for his gooseberry wine (the best in all that countryside), and famed among the children for his goodness, wherever he went he carried a big bag of sweets in his pocket, would pop one into the mouth of every child that took his fancy, and run away smiling.

"*I* have no trouble to keep the children good," he would say to the school teachers. "Just pop a sucker in their mouth! That'll keep them quiet!"

Or sometimes a courtly old man would come to the gate with slow and feeble step. This was Jason Hubbard, a man of good birth who died in the workhouse. He was broken in body and in spirit, but he clung to the ways of honour to the end.

"Why don't you go into the House?" he was asked.

"It's not the House I'm afraid on," he answered. "It's the hog's bath!"

Or sometimes it was Tuckie Charlie who would come to the manse door. Charlie was the "softie" of the town, and he came to fill his belly with the scraps of bread and tart and pudding that fell from the minister's table. He was "soft," but he was good, and into his weak brain there came oftentimes the vision of the Good Man who died upon the Tree.

A mixed but noble company, these all fell on sleep, some before, some after the Man of God, leaving behind them in the lives of the children of the manse many a fragrant memory. Old hands for the shaping of young lives, not one of them but faced the dark with a smile. Human as Christ, and simple as human, not one but left a kindly mark behind him—in the heart of my Passion Flower.

CHAPTER FOUR

HOW I FOUND MY PASSION FLOWER IN THE OLD MANSE GARDEN

The unfolding of life's mystery for me, and the simple story of the finding of my love, told truly for the world's gladdening.

SUMMUM BONUM

"All the breath and the bloom of the year in
the bag of one bee:
All the wonder and wealth of the mine in
the heart of one gem:
In the core of one pearl all the shade and
the shine of the sea:
Breath and bloom, shade and shine,—wonder,
wealth, and—how far above them—
Truth, that's brighter than gem,
Trust, that's purer than pearl,—
Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe—all
were for me
In the kiss of one girl."

ROBERT BROWNING.

IV. HOW I FOUND MY PASSION FLOWER IN THE OLD MANSE GARDEN

EVERY FLOWER IN MY Garden of the Red, Red Rose, but one red Passion Flower. And I knew not where to find it. But I found it all the same.

Often have I thought if men would only tell the unfolding of life's mystery, and write the simple story of the finding of their love, what a great and human book the world would have for its lifting and gladdening. Let me tell you the unfolding of my riddle, and write you the story of how I found my Passion Flower. It is not a bit like what I read in books, and not at all like what I see at the play, but it is true.

An old college friend was breaking the Bread of Life in a quiet little town in the north of Buckinghamshire. He had followed a Man of God whose heart had been set on building a new sanctu-

ary, and whose eyes were not given to see the glory. And it was the joy of my old friend to build a new house to the Father. Nothing would do, when it was built, but that I should come through to the opening. And I came. When I left My Garden of the Red, Red Rose, it was raining hard, and when I reached the station I was soaked to the skin. There was no turning back: there was only one train that would carry me through. It was a wild November day. The rain turned to sleet, and the sleet to snow, and the Snow King revelled in his fury. The line became blocked, and the train was delayed. Nine hours in sodden clothes I shivered, and nine hours longed for my cosy study in My Garden of the Red, Red Rose.

At length, however, I came to the kindly shelter of the Old Manse. Here my college friend guested with the family of the late Man of God. A more hos-

pitable lady than his widowed queen I had never met. She beamed a joyous welcome, and revealed a mother's kindness in every word and deed. Her table groaned with appetising food, and her fire glowed as brightly as her goodness. Round the cheerful fire we sat till midnight, laughing and talking and telling stories of long ago—the widowed queen, two old college friends, a son of the manse, and I. And, with us, sat the dark-haired Gertrude. Her eyes reflected quickly every feeling that touched her heart, and her laughter was healthy and kind. Her speech was swift as her thought, and I noted, well, that her deepest joy was in the great, pleasant, cultured things of life. Her soul was clear as a lake in summer, and sunlight played upon her dreams.

Next day we walked through snow to the opening of the sanctuary. That night, as we sat round the fire, again I

shivered. And, next morning, I could not rise. By nightfall I was fighting for my life. Fire raged in my breast and burned deeply. Ten days I fought. And, night and day, the widowed queen attended me. Had I been her own son she could not have done more. Had I been a prince I could not have found more kindness. With her own hands she tended me; and her hands were soft as a mother's. She, too, was fighting—for my life. With the zest of one who had fought many a battle, she nursed me night and day. With the strength of one who had stood by many in peril, she stood by me. With her courage she cheered me. With her cheerfulness braced me. And, with radiant hope, talked of sunlit seas. Ten days, and then the battle turned. And we won. It was as much her fight as mine: the honours of war were with the widowed queen.

On the twelfth day, the dark-haired

Gertrude stole into the room, and came to my bedside.

"I have come to read to you," she blushed. "How are you?"

"Better, thank you," I answered, well pleased.

"What shall I read?" she asked.

"'THE EVERLASTING YEA,'" I answered, out of the depths of my battle.

Now, she loved *Sartor*, and when I asked for the great chapter, her eyes lit with joy: never before had she heard a man in his extremity ask for "THE EVERLASTING YEA." She found the book, gave me a smile, and began.

I followed her pleasing voice, word by word, till she came to the great passage —"'*Es leuchtet mir ein*, I see a glimpse of it! there is in man a HIGHER than Love of Happiness: he can do without Happiness, and instead thereof find Blessedness! Was it not to preach forth this same HIGHER that sages and martyrs, the Poet

and the Priest, in all times, have spoken and suffered, bearing testimony, through life and through death, of the God-like that is in Man, and how in the God-like only has he Strength and Freedom? Which God-inspired Doctrine art thou also honoured to be taught; O Heavens! and broken with manifold merciful afflictions, even till thou become contrite, and learn it! O thank thy Destiny for these; thankfully bear what yet remain: thou hadst need of them; the Self in thee needed to be annihilated. By benignant fever-paroxysms is Life rooting out the deep-seated chronic Disease, and triumphs over Death. On the roaring billows of Time, thou art not engulfed, but borne aloft into the azure of Eternity. Love not Pleasure; love God. This is the EVERLASTING YEA, wherein all contradiction is solved: wherein who so walks and works, it is well with him.'"

And, as she read, I fell asleep. And,

RED, RED ROSE

as I slept, I dreamed. I was in My Garden of the Red, Red Rose, looking for someone. And as I went down the sunlit path I heard a voice calling, like to the voice of the dark-haired Gertrude. But, often as I came where she called, I could not find her. I looked behind the apple-trees, among the shrubs, and round by the red, red roses. But could not find her. Yet, often as I came to the sunlit path, again I heard her voice calling, and went in quest of her once more. So, till dark. And, with the dark, came wind and rain, sleet and snow. And I found myself fighting for my life in the dark, my feet entangled among my rose-trees. And, as I fought, I heard a voice calling, like to the voice of the dark-haired Gertrude. It was near me, almost by my side, in front. And I struggled to reach her. But, as I fought, the wind and the rain, the sleet and the snow fought against me, and I fell. And, even as I fell, I saw her

bending over me. Her garments were white with snow, her hair, also, white with snow, but in her hand was a red, red rose. Her face I could not see: it was turned from me, as if she wished to hide from me the gold light that danced in her eyes. But, as I lay in the dark, faint and sore, she stooped down and touched me. And suddenly it was light. And I awoke.

The dark-haired Gertrude was by my side. Her clear, pleasing voice was pealing forth the music of THE EVERLASTING YEA, nearing the end: "'It is with man's Soul as it was with Nature: the beginning of Creation is—Light. Till the eye have vision, the whole members are in bonds. Divine moment, when over the tempest-tost Soul, as once over the wild-weltering Chaos, it is spoken: Let there be Light! Ever to the greatest that has felt such moment, is it not miraculous and God-announcing: even as, under simpler figures, to the simplest and least.

THY FLOWERS OF MY GARDEN

The mad primeval Discord is hushed; the rudely-jumbled conflicting elements bind themselves into separate Firmaments: deep, silent rock-foundations are built beneath; and the skyey vault with its everlasting Luminaries above: instead of a dark wasteful Chaos, we have a blooming, fertile, heaven-encompassed World.'"

Next day, she came again, and the next, and the next, till my convalescence, reading to me from her treasure-store of books, Carlyle's *Heroes*, Emerson's great essay on *Compensation*, Rossetti's *Blessed Damozel*, Keats's *Nightingale*, Shelley's *Lark*, Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, Jean Ingelow's *Choir Celestial*, Charles Lamb's *Old Familiar Faces*, Kingsley's *Hypatia*, Stevenson's *Catriona*, Browning's *Gold Hair*, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, and *Epilogue to Asolando*. When she was not with me, I heard her often tripping about the house, or playing in

the music-room. And, when I became convalescent, she took me into the Old Manse Garden, and showed me the spots she loved best, and recounted to me, with gusto, all the things I have already told you. And, when I tired, she would give me her arm, and lead me to the little green couch in the music-room, and play to me the works I loved best—the Adagios of Beethoven's Sonatas, his glorious *Moonlight Sonata*—really a passionate love-letter to the Countess Giulia Guicciardi—the *Sonata Pathétique*, with its great deep opening chords and the lovely melody of its second movement, the *Adagio Cantabile*, Chopin's *Berceuse* and *Nocturnes*, Raff's *La Fileuse*, Moszkowski's *Serenata*, many lovely little melodies from Grieg, and quaint little bits from Schumann. All this time, we never mentioned love, though I knew that the red, red rose was growing.

Once convalescent, I soon gathered

strength, but I remembered the widowed queen's radiant hope of sunlit seas, and was persuaded to seek the sunshine of the Mediterranean. I was ill at ease, did not wish to leave the friendly, sheltering manse, and, on the night before my departure, almost determined to let the ship sail without me. My feelings are well expressed in a translation from the German I found among her papers the other day. She tells me it was written for me, and she makes me sing it still. It is entitled "Lebewohl," and is set to one of the loveliest melodies you have ever heard.

FAREWELL

"I, to-morrow, must depart,
And must say a long farewell;
Oh, thou jewel of my heart,
How shall I this sorrow tell?
Though to thee my love is given
Making of this world a heaven,
Dear one, I must say farewell,
I must say farewell.

If two friends are drawn to love
Knowing well each other,
Then the sun and moon will move
Ere their hearts will sever.
Oh, what sorrow, then, is mine,
Now that from this land of thine,
Dear one, I must go away,
I must go away.

When soft breezes kiss thy brow,
Fan thy face so lightly,
Know that I am sending now
Thousand kisses nightly.
Thoughts of love I send to thee,
Daily round thy home to be;
Dear one, I'll remember thee,
I'll remember thee."

These were my feelings, I say, written for me by her own true pen. Yet I went away without singing my song, or telling my love.

I sailed through the Mediterranean from Gibraltar to Joppa, drinking in the beauty of sunlit seas and seeing many wonderful sights. But when I saw the prow of the ship turn westward I was

glad. And, when I came home, it was not for My Garden of the Red, Red Rose I made, but for the Old Manse Garden.

As I ran upstairs to my old bedroom, she came out of the music-room. And we met. The banisters of the stair were between. We looked at one another and smiled, yet scarce knew what to do. Then, almost unawares, our lips met, between the banisters, in the tiniest, weeniest kiss you ever saw. And, she was gone.

In a little, I came down to the music-room. She was waiting for me. I shut the door, and opened my arms.

"Come!" I cried, my heart beating swiftly.

She looked at me a moment, wondering. Then the great golden light filled her eyes. And she came.

"Is it all right, Jamie?" she whispered, the great golden light shining through tears.

"It's all right, dear one," I answered. "I love you!"

And our lips met in one long, passionate kiss.

"All right?"

Why—

"Breath and bloom, shade and shine,—
wonder, wealth, and—how far above them—
Truth, that's brighter than gem,
Trust, that's purer than pearl,—
Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe—all were for me
In the kiss of one girl."

CHAPTER FIVE

HOW I BROUGHT MY TRUE LOVE TO MY GARDEN OF THE RED, RED ROSE

The story of my love-making, and of my visits to the Old Manse Garden, especially of one visit when I came and carried away my true love, and brought her to My Garden of the Red, Red Rose.

"How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and Ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise;
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith;
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death."

E. B. Browning.

CHAPTER FIVE
HOW I BROUGHT MY TRUE LOVE TO MY GARDEN OF THE RED, RED ROSE

WHEN I CAME BACK to My Garden of the Red, Red Rose, the birds were singing. When I walked down the sunlit paths, my little red robin came to meet me. When I came out in the fresh hours of the morning to behold the beauty of My Garden, the blackbirds and the thrushes sang to me. And when I wandered through the copse on the hill, or walked by the brook in the hollow, the nightingales poured forth their ecstasy of song. The blossom on the fruit-trees that spring was the fairest I had ever seen, and, all over the Valley, as all over My Garden, the prospect of a rich harvest was great. Everywhere I went, the Valley, beautiful before, seemed more beautiful now, and My Garden, dear to

my life always, seemed lovelier now than ever. There was new life, and new joy, and new hope in every field. And the singing birds were singing in my heart.

When I took up my pen to write, my Passion Flower was near me. When I wove my fancies into song, it was her white hand that guided my pen. When I wrought at my Oriental romance, it was her black hair that fell on my heroine's shoulders and her brown eyes in which the gold light shone. When my hero fought for her love, and cried, in the dark, for her to come to him, it was really my heart that was crying for my dark-haired Gertrude and longing to have her with me in My Garden of the Red, Red Rose. When he stood in the dark and sang, I was with him. He was I, and I was he. And I sang, not for his Oriental maid, but for my brown-eyed Gertrude. Here is my Oriental song. Read it, and judge for yourself.

RED, RED ROSE

ORIENTAL LOVE SONG

"Dear, all alone in the dark,
While the owls are crying,
I wait for thy tarrying feet, and hark
To the Night-winds sighing;
I wait . . . till the grey dawn breaks
And the Morning-light
Shoots her twice-burnished swords
Into the hordes
Of Night,
And the great wide world awakes.

Here, in the dead of the dark,
While the owls are crying,
I chant to my sorrowing heart, and hark
To the Night-winds sighing;
I chant . . . till the star-light dies,
And the Bird o' Love
Spreads his twice-blessed wings,
And comes, and sings,
O dove,
Of the love in thy golden eyes.

Why dost thou linger, my love?
Haste, the larks are singing;
I faint for thy gladdening smile, thou
dove,
And the kiss thou'rt bringing;

I faint . . . and the grey dawn breaks,
And the Morning-light
Shoots her twice-burnished swords
Into the hordes
Of Night,
And the great wide world awakes.

Here, unto me in the dark,
While the owls are crying,
Oh haste, with thy tarrying feet, and
hark
To the Night-winds sighing;
And chant . . . till the star-light dies,
And the Bird o' Love
Spreads his twice-blessed wings,
And comes, and sings,
Thou dove,
In the light of thy golden eyes."

From this you will see that, with all the blossom on my trees and all the joy in my heart, one thing was missing still, and that I should not be happy till I carried away my true love and brought her to My Garden of the Red, Red Rose.

Often did I take train, and run through

to the Old Manse Garden. Not in rain, or sleet, or snow, now, did I come, but in sunshine. And, often as I came, the gold light danced in her eyes. Every nook and corner of the Garden became dear to me, for our love's sake, and every beauty-spot in the countryside knew the laughter of our passion. In the moonlight, under the apple-tree where my bride was cradled, I wooed her. In the sunlight, under the beech-trees in the spinneys, we lay, gazing through the green leaves at the white clouds in the blue skies, and telling our love. At sunset, we would stand in the stillness of the wood and watch the red sun pass to his setting, and laugh for the joy that was in us. At twilight, we would wend our way home with our arms filled with wild flowers. One day we would row on the river, fill our boat with lilies from the lily-growing Ouse, or hide her among the bulrushes while we looked for

birds' nests, or run her up to the Island to picnic in its lovely shade. Another day we would walk to the Wilderness of the famed poet, or sit in his Alcove, or pass through fields and woods, over stiles and brooklets, to the Poet's Oak five miles away. Yet another day, we would cross the Seven Bridges, pass through the open fields, and come to Clifton Hill, where the aspen trees tremble. Here, under the aspen trees, would we stand, looking away across the meadows and the slow-winding river, trembling for the hope that was in us.

So the spring passed, and summer and autumn. They were happy days; happy, surely, as ever man and maiden knew. The gold light grew in her eyes, and the fires glowed in our breasts. The world was bathed in sunshine, and the sunlight played on our hopes, and our joy grew from more to more. Happy as happy could be was my dark-haired Ger-

trude. But my joy was sullied with an undertone of longing. In my happiest moments it was most clamant; in my deepest joy most felt. I told you that I had everything my heart desired in My Garden of the Red, Red Rose, everything but love; every flower but one red Passion Bloom. It was true. But love brings new responsibilities and new thoughts. I could not take my dear Brown Eyes and bring her to my Garden of the Red, Red Rose only. I must make beautiful for her our home, and provide against the wants of life. I am not writing you a story; I am writing you a history. In story-books, men and women love and wed as if the world were rolling in wealth, and one had only to say, "Marry me!" and gold fell at one's feet. In real life, tens of thousands of young folk find themselves as we did; they love each other well, and eagerly desire to wed, but are unable for a while

to meet life's new responsibilities. Desire does not build mansions, or furnish houses, or pay your merchants' bills. All that winter I wrought hard at my Oriental romance. My hero cut brave figures, and my heroine grew more charming than ever. Spring came and found my hope rising. Whiter than the snowdrops, fairer than the primroses, sweeter than the cherry blossom was my deep, passionate desire. And, when the gold of the daffodils lay in every garden, I began to see my way through. I finished my romance, came downstairs, and found a letter from my love. In it was a little poem which decided me. Here it is.

DAFFODILS

" Pale yellow
Daffodils,
In thy fair robes blowing,
We shall
Forget our ills,
Now that thou art growing.

Dark, dark,
Has winter been,
Bitter winds a-biting,
But now,
With gold and green,
Thou the earth art lighting.

Thrush, thrush,
With low notes first
Tune thy happy singing,
Flowers from
The earth have burst,
Life and laughter bringing.

Love, love,
Come out, to-day,
All thy sweetness giving,
That with
The flowers we may
Know the joy of living."

After that, what could I do? I took the first train through to the Old Manse Garden, led her to the summer-house, took her hands, and said:

"My book will be out the first of September."

"How lovely!" she answered, delighted.

Then I took her face in my hands so that her eyes looked into mine, and said:

"When shall it be?"

"The second of September," she answered, her face spreading with golden joy.

And the second of September it was.

We sat down, laughing and loving, playing with our pencils and papers, and counted the cost of living. Item after item went down, with laughter and jest, till the world seemed heaven.

"First, a home!" she laughed. "I have it! An advertisement in the Bedford paper!"

"Like what?" I answered, entering on the jest.

"'WANTED.—A ROSE-COVERED COTTAGE, FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD.'"

"Lovely," I smiled. "Just the thing

for me," well knowing where my roses grew.

"Item two—A room for you to write in all the morning, and a room for music in the evening when the sun burns low."

"Glorious," I shouted. "Life more abundantly."

"Item three, 'thirdly and lastly, brethren,'—Love in the study, love in the dining-room, love in the music-room, love all over!"

"Love it shall be," I cried, "every day, and all the day!" and clasped her to my heart.

The second of September, at noon, it was. The sun shone. The dear old widowed queen wept for joy. The church was gay with flowers and crowded with friends. My old college friend blessed us in the name of the Christ. I led her forth, radiant, on my arm. We ran the merry gauntlet of rice and confetti, and were bundled into our carriage by Old Dad,

Gentleman John, and Dicky Fennell. The happiest marriage lunch followed. And then we were off!

To Scotland by the afternoon train. Lovely days in Edinburgh, in the Western Highlands, through the Kyles of Bute, the tour of the Lochs, up Loch Lomond to Inversnaid, over the hills to Loch Katrine, by Loch Achray and Loch Vennachar to beautiful Callander, from Callander to Pitlochry, through the Pass of Killiecrankie, up Strath Tummel, up Ben-y-Vrackie, over the shoulder of Schiehallion, the happiest souls in Scotland.

Then home, home to My Garden of the Red, Red Rose. I showed her my "Rose-covered Cottage." I led her down the sunlit path, showed her my shrubs and my trees, my flowers and fruit, my apples reddening in the evening sun, and my red, red roses making fragrant and glorious the whole garden.

And, when I had shown her all, I took her face in my hands again, and smiled:

"Like what, dear one?"

"Paradise!" she answered.

Who were the happiest pair in England?

Surely, that day, Gertrude and I, as we stood, eye to eye, in the golden light of the setting sun, in My Garden of the Red, Red Rose.

CHAPTER SIX

BLOSSOM & SONG

In which I tell you of my happiness, of the golden fruit in My Garden, and of the "blossom and song" throughout the Valley, rightly named "The Garden of England."

"Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Rosy are her cheeks,
And a Rose her mouth."

TENNYSON.

VI. BLOSSOM & SONG

I WAS NOT DISAPPOINTED. The golden fruit in My Garden was but a parable of my joy. Ripe, luscious, beautiful, it grew from more to more, and deepened in colour and charm from day to day. Plums of every kind and apples of the rarest, a joy it was to pick them with the bloom upon them and to eat them standing beneath the trees. Kind, sunny, good, my little wife grew in love and grace, and held me with her charms. Sane and joyous, wise in judgment and careful of speech, and unselfish as kind, she drew my love from more to more, from day to day. The roses in My Garden were as nothing to the roses on her cheeks, and the bloom on my apples and my plums not to be compared to the bloom of her joyous life. Winter followed autumn, and spring winter, and every season had its joy for Gertrude and for me. In our cosy study we wrought and dreamed, side by side, and in our music-room

played and sang all the winter through. When spring came, we went forth together to drink in the wonder of the Valley, and, when summer came, we watched the men and women in the fields working in the sun. She merrier grew with the passing of the days, and teased me about the passion of my love and the woefulness of my wedded awakening. Often, of a summer evening, when her fingers swiftly flew over the keys and played for me one of Beethoven's sonatas or Chopin's nocturnes, she would stop, in the midst of her joy, and sing to me a roguish little song called "Maying." Then the golden light would shine in her eyes, and her triumphant joy eclipse her merry twinkle. For she knew, always, how her song would end, and to what it would drive me. I write you the song, but I cannot paint you the twinkle in her eyes or the triumph in her voice.

RED, RED ROSE

MAYING

I

"My love she went a-maying,
To wash her face with dew,
My dove she went a-haying,
And, yes sir, I went too!

II

The dew it kissed her neatly,
The merry maying dew,
The hay she carried sweetly,
And, yes, I kissed her too!

III

My love she said she would not,
I said I would, 'like dew,'
My dove she cried she could not,
I said I could, 'for you'!

IV

But, oh, she quick consented,
And went a-wedding too,
And drives me now demented,
Oh, yes sir, it is true!"

There could be one ending only to such a song, sung by my dark-haired Gertrude. I would leave my book, or

drop my pen, and rush to the piano. I have told you that her cheeks were roses. I tell you, now, that her lips were roses, too, and a rose her mouth. And the petals were in danger of being crushed.

So autumn passed to winter, and winter to spring, with all its glory of blossom and song. I have mentioned to you how beautiful was the garden when I first came, and how glorious the Valley in the spring. Seen, alone, it captured me. Seen, in company of my bride, with love burning in our hearts for all that is beautiful and good, it burnt itself into my brain in a way I have never forgotten. I wish you could have seen it, and drunk with us that cup of joy. Thousands travel to see it every year, and it is worth a journey of a thousand miles. Shakespeare's Avon flows gently through the Vale and waters it with its flower-kissed wealth. Far as the eye can reach, millions upon millions of fruit-trees

in blossom gladden the sight. Rightly men have called it "The Garden of England," a "Garden of God."

For over a month the Valley enjoys a succession of fruit-blossom. First blooms the almond-tree, with its lovely pale pink blossom. It is one of the earliest "notes" of spring, the forerunner of a glorious company. Next, comes the cherry, with its large snow-white blossom, the double cherry being, of course, the loveliest of all. In My Garden of the Red, Red Rose there is a cherry-tree which, in full bloom, is one of the fairest sights on earth. Its red, fleshy fruit, too, is a dream. Another, by the blacksmith's shop, in our tiny village, draws admiring sightseers from all the countryside. But, for every cherry-tree that we own, there are tens of thousands of plum-trees in the Valley. Their blooming turns the Valley into a sea of blossom. There is, also, the apple following the blossom-

ing of the pear, the glowing white of the pear preparing the way for the deeper pink of the apple. One good friend of mine has hundreds of acres of these, a great sea of white and pink blossom every spring. For every pear- and apple-tree, however, there are hundreds of plum-trees throughout the Valley; and their white sea it is which brings thousands to see it from afar.

In every village and hamlet throughout the Valley, every cottage garden is well filled with fruit-trees. For these cottages the happy peasants pay anywhere from a pound to six pounds a year. One sweet, little, two-roomed, thatched cottage that I love (and to which I threaten to retreat, for ever, if Gertrude will not come to me when I call), with nearly a third of an acre of garden and a little babbling brook running through it, was let to an old widow woman for a pound a year. The average

rent in half a dozen hamlets near My Garden of the Red, Red Rose is four pounds a year for house and garden; the house of four or five rooms, the garden a quarter of an acre, more or less. Some of the more modern cottages, perhaps more comfortable but certainly less beautiful, with five or six rooms and garden, fetch the princely sum of six pounds a year. Almost every cottager reckons to clear his rent from the produce of his garden. Old John, a merry old hero in the garden next to mine, often paid his rent from one fine old pear-tree alone—a giant pear and prolific fruit-bearer. Plum-trees, as I have said, predominate, from the common yellow Pershore plum to the blue monarch, the greengage, and the red Victoria, and from these the cottager, as well as the big fruit-grower, reaps a luscious harvest.

The blossom comes out early in April, and is at its best, usually, towards the

middle or end of the month, according to the season. In late years, May finds the bloom still with us. The blossom is thickest and whitest at Evesham and Pershore, but everywhere you go it is a sea of white glory. To look down on it from a height, and behold it rise at your feet and melt away in the distance is preferred by some. For this purpose you must climb the old Bell Tower, at Evesham, and there you may feast your heart on the vision: far as the eye can reach are gardens and orchards white with blossom. Better still, to my mind, is to climb Green Hill, a little to the north of the town, and get among the blossom itself—and above it, too. Here, on every side of the hill, is a milky way of snow-white blossom. Far as Bredon Hill in the south and the Malverns in the west, far as the Cotswolds in the east and the Lenches in the north, spreads the white sea of plum blossom.

RED, RED ROSE

Around us, and all over the Green Hill, the blossom glistens in the sunlight and gives forth the faintest of sweet odours in the heat of the day. On the ground itself, between the rows of fruit-trees, are acres of gillyflowers, white narcissi, and golden daffodils, all in their season. In the summer of 1265 the battle of Evesham was fought on this hill, and Simon de Montfort defeated and slain. To-day, fed by the Norman blood that crimsoned the Green Hill long ago, the gillyflowers, narcissi, daffodils, and white plum-trees spread their splendour as nowhere else in all the broad Valley.

Driving through Wick and Fladbury, typical English villages both, you come to the old-world town of Pershore. Famed all the country over for the egg plum that bears its name, it has given of its golden fruit to all the Valley: in every village and hamlet, every town and orchard, the Pershore plum is growing. In

the town itself it is at its best. Whoso has tasted jam made of Pershores, dead ripe, golden yellow, does not long for apricots, or any other treasure under the sun. The white blossom of spring surrounds the old grey Benedictine Church, founded there in 689, and the white sea spreads from its lichened walls far as Worcester on the west and Tewkesbury on the south. Breaks in the blossom become frequent as we reach the old abbey town; but the waves of the sea come right up to the walls of the ancient gateway, and fling their white petal-foam over the graves of the dead. The present abbey, an exquisite dream in stone, the gem of the Midlands, I ween, contains many fine old monuments and a whole series of beautiful stained-glass windows, in perfect harmony; but the saints of yesterday and to-day, whose eyes are cleansed to see the beauty of life, behold no fairer thing, in church or

field, than this white sea of plum blossom.

This spring, the spring of which I write, the spring in which I took my bride to behold the beauty, the blossom was at its best. Leaning on my arm, I led her from town to town, from orchard to orchard, from garden to garden. Everywhere the trees were white with bloom. Did they know her secret? Did they understand her joy? Did the angels of the orchards whisper together, and put on their whitest, fairest garments for her gladdening? Did the sun himself smile, and go before her, to prepare the way of my lady and fill her soul with loveliness?

This spring, also, the birds in My Garden of the Red, Red Rose sang their sweetest. Among the blossom of my almond-tree, my little robin redbreast piped his loudest. Among the bloom of my cherry-trees, the blackbirds fluted forth their rich, deep, haunting melodies. Among the pear and apple blossom, the

thrushes sang from morning till eve. One lovely yellow-bill made my double cherry his home, and rivalled the blossom with his song. One fluffy-breasted thrush claimed my apple-tree, and made the red blossom ring with his twice-repeated joy. Which to admire most, the rich, deep melodies of the blackbird or the twice-sung raptures of the thrush, I knew not, for long. They sang in rivalry, and flung their challenge, or their wooing notes, to each other, or to a distant fellow pealing forth his music in the garden beyond. I listened, in a fix twixt two, and drank in their joyous notes, all the day long, and would not have decided yet, methinks, had not I noted that Gertrude chose the apple-tree for her seat, and listened, with upturned face, to the even-song of the thrush. Then, it was, I wrote my poem, "The Singers," and put into it her love and mine.

RED, RED ROSE

THE SINGERS

I

"If all the singers there be in the lands
Where the sunrays glow,
Should come to me, flying over the sands
Where the sea-winds blow,
Should come, and should sit them here on our tree,
And sing to me,
My heart would be filled with joy, all day long,
For the birds and their song.

II

If half the warblers that chant in the woods
Where the sunbeams roam,
Should come to us, seeking nests for their broods,
Far over the foam,
Should come, and should rest them here by our lawn,
And sing at dawn,
My life would be rich with mirth, all day long,
For the birds and their song.

III

If only one bird came over the sea,
From the sunlit climes,

Should speed, steering its wing swift and
free,
And ring me its chimes,
Should speed to us, out of the fields of
light,
And sing at night,
E'en then would my heart be full, all day
long,
For that bird and its song.

IV

If, yet, in the heart of the sun-warm'd
lands,
The nightingale stayed,
And never a mile toward our storm-swept
sands,
The singing choirs strayed,
And never a wing came over the sea
To sing to me,
E'en still would my joy be full, all day
long,
For one bird and its song.

V

For, here, in our land of the sword-scarred
dales,
My singer doth stay,

And, here, in the woods of our sun-kissed
vales,
Doth pipe me its lay,
And, e'en from the boughs of our apple-
tree
Doth sing to me,
Till my heart it beats with joy, all day
long,
For the thrush and its song."

Ah, little brown bird, did you know her secret, too? Did you see her face spread with joy? Did she tell it to you, only you, under the apple-tree? Oh, little brown brother, I think, I think you knew, and were glad—glad, almost, as I.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE FLOWERS OF MY GARDEN

Being a note on the flowers in My Garden of the Red, Red Rose, and especially on one flower that was growing there for my life's long gladdening.

"The pride of every grove I chose,
The violet sweet and lily fair,
The dappled pink, and blushing rose,
To deck my charming Chloe's hair."

MATTHEW PRIOR.

CHAPTER SEVEN THE FLOWERS OF MY GARDEN

I HAVE TOLD YOU LITTLE, so far, of the contents of My Garden. While we are passing through that long summer of hope, let me tell you of the flowers in My Garden. You know that I love the flowers of the trees, for their own sake as well as for their fruit, and I would have you know that I love the flowering shrubs quite as much. The foliage of the maple-tree, the catkins of the hazel, the blossom of my cedar of Lebanon, are to me a delight as deep and true as the blossom of the apple and the plum and the flowers of red currant and raspberry bushes. Lovely, too, are the flowers and berries of the holly, privet, ivy, and hawthorn. These are to me, each in its season, a sincere joy. Still more so, the flowers of half a dozen common shrubs that grow in My Garden: I love them almost as a mother loves her child; the beautiful yellow

broom, with its tiny leaves and clusters of butterfly-shaped flowers; the deep golden flower of the prickly gorse, a brave shrub that never rests, and lends its dash of gold to My Garden all the year round; the Guelder rose, with its lovely snowballs in spring and ruddy berries in autumn, a freely-growing, beautiful shrub of much interest; the golden rain of the glorious laburnum, with its marvellous wealth and charm; the flowers of the lilac, especially my White Lady, the sweet-smelling "lay-lock" of My Garden, with its wonderful Oriental grace of leaf and blossom and its massive Persian splendour; and the sweet-smelling honeysuckle or wood-bine (its favourite name with the poets), of which I had the common sort, the ever-green, and the Japanese. Whoso has these six shrubs and cannot be happy is in need of the pity of God and man.

Of the flowers that do not grow on

shrubs or trees in My Garden, I may only name a few. There were many others, gladdening our hearts through that long summer of hope, but to name all now were impossible. We had them in beds or in clumps, masses of colour thrown against a background of shrubs or trees, or flung into contrast one with the other. Some of them were not garden flowers at all, flowers that the matter-of-fact gardener would have cast forth or left to grow in the woods or fields, but they gave us both great pleasure. Such were my little friends the primrose, that sweet emblem of girlhood loved by Botticelli among painters, Shakespeare among poets, perhaps the best loved of all spring flowers; the cowslip, with its lovely stately blooms and its rich delicious wine; the wild hyacinth or bluebell, one of the flowers of the bed of Jove,

> "Saffron flow'rs and hyacinths
> Helped make the sacred bed";

ox-eye daisy, the grand cousin of Burns's "wee modest, crimson-tipped flow'r"; creeping buttercup, with its shining yellow flower, growing wild away at the foot of the garden, and transfiguring an old rockery with its bloom; goatsbeard, or "Jack-go-to-bed-at-noon," growing by its side, with its bright yellow dandelion-like flowers that shut at noon; and a patch of meadow-sweet that grew by an old spring at the bottom of the garden. All these grew in My Garden and gave us much delight, children of the woods and fields though they be.

Some of my flowers had grown in the garden for years, planted by other hands and loved by other hearts; and these, too, I could not cast out. I did not love them as I love others I shall name, but I remembered the dead, and grew them for their sake. Among such were Sweet William, a gift to us from the Kaiser's country; nasturtium, loved of Gertrude,

methinks, for its salad leaves and its "caper" sauce, and of many for its finely massed foliage and happy combination of flowers and leaves; Love-in-the-Mist, Devil-in-a-Bush, or Blue-Beard, as it is variously called, a flower not without charm, but too spiky for me; candytuft, marigold, the pansy, with its wealth of old-world names—Heart's-ease, Love-in-Idleness, Jump-up-and-kiss-Me, Three-faces-under-a-Hood, Pink-of-my-John, and many another sweet name; crocus, tulips, geraniums, fuchsias, begonias, and many another of the showy tribe. Favourites with many, and not without advantage, massed in beds or set in ample borders, they give me pleasure but scarce delight.

The flowers in My Garden that took the heart both of Gertrude and of me I must now name. All that year, spring, summer, and autumn, we came to them, and never otherwise than with delight.

My joy in them was increased when Gertrude leaned heavily on my arm, and my love went out specially to those that won her smile. Early in the spring came the gillyflower, all shades and varieties of hue, from the palest yellow to the deepest brown. Later came my Lady's-smock, narcissus, and the daffodil. "When the cuckowe doth begin to sing her pleasant notes without stammering," says that rare old English garden-lover Gerard, the Lady's-smock begins to flower. "Ladysmock all silver white," Shakespeare calls it in *Love's Labour Lost*, while old Izaak Walton and poor young Chatterton both held it high in honour. Narcissus, the flower of the shadow-loving youth of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and of the lovely poems by Keats and John Addington Symonds, lent its white beauty to the garden, and made that spring a scented joy for me, while the golden daffodil made it a perpetual benediction.

Its golden "chalice-flowers" were my sacramental hope, its "Lent lilies" my incarnate glory. No flower do I love more than the golden daffodil; in My Garden of the Red, Red Rose I had beds and clumps of it all over the place for my heart's deep gladdening. Not one of the countless flowers of summer quite takes the place of the golden daffodil for me.

With the coming of May bloomed the Lily-of-the-Valley and its close friend Solomon's Seal. The May Lily has been one of my favourite flowers since childhood. I wore it (a forced bloom) on my breast on my wedding-day, and I never see it anywhere but I wish to pick a spray and deck myself in all its beauty once again. More than once that May, I not only decked myself with it, but fastened it on Gertrude's breast and placed it among her hair to add to my joy. Other beautiful lilies I grew, too, lilium specio-

sum and lancifolium, white, orange, and Martagon lilies from the Levant, and these, also, Gertrude greatly loved.

June saw my pinks and carnations in flower, my Canterbury Bells, poppies, and first sweet peas. The white, red, and pink of the clove gillyflower, in beds, under the shelter of the southern gable, greatly took the fancy of my love: she could not pass them without stooping down to pick a few. The Canterbury Bells, our Lady's white glove, grew near them under the shelter of the apple-trees, lovely always against a dark background. Shirley and Iceland poppies we specially favoured; though the great, gorgeous Oriental we loved also, for the bees' sake and for its mass of glowing colour. Another member of the poppy tribe I love, in spite of its cumbrous name, the Eschscholtzia. Its beautiful orange flower, graceful foliage, and variety of hue make it a great joy, while its

habit of folding up its buds and blossom on a cloudy day make it one of the prophets of My Garden. The sweet pea, with its wonderful variety of shade and hue, was one of the greatest joys of our summer. We grew it in rows, and in clumps among the herbs, every variety of pea that we could buy, and almost every colour under the sun. It was to us a parable: even as it clung to the faggots we clung to one another: even as it soared, our souls aspired, seeking ever Heaven's smile. The finest description I know of this sweet flower is by John Keats. To him it seems

> "on tiptoe for a flight;
> With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate white,
> And taper fingers catching at all things,
> To bind them all about with tiny rings."

July saw other favourites all over the garden—foxgloves, hollyhocks, lupin, snapdragon, flower de luce, passion flowers, and Clarkia. Grown among the

shrubs and herbs, and flung against a tall dark background, there are few more graceful and decorative flowers than the foxglove. Its wealth of colour and purple spikes make it the wonder of every passer-by. Our Lady's glove they call it in France (like the Canterbury Bell) and thimblewort in England. The heavy hollyhocks carried their burden gladly that summer, and the gold-dusted snapdragon scattered its wealth freely—as if they also knew. The fiery lupin kept the foxgloves company, and rivalled them almost in rich decorative effect: its blossom and leaves were eaten by the Romans in pretty fancy; they believed the flower would give new fire to the brain and kindle the noblest imagination—a food for poets and painters and men who would deck the world of fancy with all the colours of the rainbow. "The flower de luce," writes that fond lover, Parkinson, "is called Iris from the Rain-

bow, whose various colours the flower thereof doth imitate"; and an old English Herbal (1526) says that the seeds of the white iris with milk of an ass or goat, drawn warm, are good for "payne of the herte!" I had no "payne of the herte" that summer (it was the happiest summer of my life), and so I cannot tell if it be true, but I can tell you that the white and yellow iris, without milk of ass or goat, is good for "joy of the herte." To me it is one of the loveliest of flowers, and an everlasting joy. The curious and intricate formation of the passion flower, with its handsome foliage, tapering leaves, and brilliant blossom, was to us both a source of great delight. She was my Passion Flower; her tendrils were coiled about my life; her tapering "leaves" the delight of my eye; and her brilliant "blossom" the joy of my heart. Another flower, only recently imported from the Rocky Mountains and named

after its finder, Captain Clark, we loved. Its charming leaf and beautiful bloom I would recommend to all who love a garden.

A glorious summer it was. My flowers bloomed freely, and my joy grew from more to more. Gertrude leaned on my arm, and feasted her heart on the beauty of My Garden. Autumn came, and she leaned more heavily still. And, with the autumn, bloomed three flowers, dear to both our hearts—the chrysanthemum, dahlia, and Anemone Japonica. We had crowds of the famous Chinese flower; my lady cut them all the autumn through, and filled every vase and bowl in the house with their beauty. The dahlia she never cut, leaving it to bloom in the garden, and deeming its bold, heavy flowers unsuited for the table of a room. The Anemone Japonica, however, could be picked to her heart's content, and grace any room with its wind-swept

beauty. It is called the wind-flower by some, because it blooms best in windy places. The festival of Adonis is honoured by it: after his death, Venus changed him (so the beautiful story goes) into this lovely flower. The Romans used it for chaplets, and I used it for the crowning of my love: when she walked heavily, and the gold light danced in her eyes, I plaited a crown of white anemones and laid them on her dark hair.

All this time, another flower was growing in My Garden of the Red, Red Rose. What was it? I said it was a boy. Gertrude said it was a boy. Everybody who knew anything about it said it was a boy.

But it wasn't. It was a girl!

CHAPTER EIGHT

HOW I FOUND A "MARGUERITE" IN MY GARDEN OF THE RED, RED ROSE

Being a description of the coming of my first-born, Marguerite, with reflections on the mystery of child-bearing, the strange and beautiful feelings it stirs in human hearts, and the change it makes when a child of one's own flesh sleeps and plays in one's own garden.

" I have no words, but fragrant is the breath,
Pale beauty, of thy second life within;
There is a wind that cometh for thy death,
But thou a life immortal dost begin,
Where in one soul, which is thy heaven, shall dwell
Thy spirit, beautiful Unspeakable!"

GEORGE MACDONALD.

CHAPTER EIGHT
HOW I FOUND A "MARGUERITE" IN MY GARDEN OF THE RED, RED ROSE

THE WIDOWED QUEEN arrived a week before the great event. We could not do other than invite her; and she came with her old-time kindness. "Apples of gold in pictures of silver" they were nothing to the smiles of the widowed queen and the golden expectations of our hearts. Her words were fitly spoken, and her confidence blew the dark from many a fear. All that was known, was known to her, and all that was good she hoped for us. Others, in fear, looked up Chavasse, and, in trembling, made their calculations. She only smiled, and waited.

The day after her arrival there came a dainty gift. It was from one of our dearest, kindest, best friends, and was for "him." We had seen it in the making at the Hall, but, when it came, we

stood before it in open-eyed admiration. Snowy white, draped in softest lawn and trimmed with lace, with no touch of colour anywhere, it was a dream of joy. We rocked it, and handled it, with care. We bent over it, and whispered, as if the child were already in it. Never, surely, was a fairer cradle made ready for a king.

The days passed slowly. By all the rules of the years, "he" was due on Christmas Day. Christmas morning dawned; but "he" gave no hint of "his" coming. The day wore to dark, and, with the dark, beat and throbbed within me the sense of mystery, the deep, strange, wonderful ways of Nature in the birth of a child. All the tender and beautiful thoughts it stirs in human hearts moved within me that day, and all the hopes, and fears, and expectations of the human breast, knocked at my gate in turn. I touched Gertrude softly. The gold light

danced in her eyes and radiant expectations spread in joy over her face. I spoke to her with a new note in my voice. I scarce could let her out of my sight. I followed her wherever she went. She laughed her sunny, joyous laugh, and faced the night with a smile. We speak of the courage of men. I tell you it is nothing to the way in which a woman meets the solemn, joyous, unknown hour of life.

Boxing Day arrived, and still "he" did not come. Night came, and all was dark. The lamps were lit. The stars shone in a stormy, wintry sky. Nature was unconcerned. She did not even seem to know that we were waiting. The evening wore to sleep. We put out the lamps and prepared to retire. Last thing, Gertrude went to the piano, and played one of her favourite nocturnes. And, with the music singing in our ears, we went to sleep.

At midnight I was awaked. An hour later, I was on my way for the doctor. Three miles through the dark of our country lanes I rode, eager not to lose a moment, glowing with pride. Not a soul did I meet in all my lonely journey. Not a sound did I hear in the dark, winter night. The fall of my feet on the doctor's steps sounded ghostly. The noise of the knocker on the street door sounded unearthly. I knocked enough to wake the dead, and yet he did not come. I knocked again, and still he did not seem in haste to hear my message. A third time I knocked, and then a head appeared at a window above me.

"What's the matter?" came through the dark.

It was the doctor.

"My wife!" I sang back to him.

"Ho!" he answered, sleepily.

I quaked.

He was a good man and keen on his

work, but he had been up the night before. And I had forgotten that even a doctor needs sleep.

"Oh! All right!" he sang in a second, "I'll follow you in a minute!"

I can see myself standing there still. I can hear the sound of our voices in the dark. I can feel the beat of my heart as it rang out its message. It was my first call, my first appeal to another man. I knocked with strange hand in a new world, and turned from the dark door with feelings of relief.

Three miles through the dark again, and then the lights of My Garden. The doctor came. The widowed queen and the nurse were upstairs. I was alone. I listened. The hours passed wearily. A storm beat against the window panes. Day dawned. The cold grey light of the winter morning crept into the room. My heart was cold. Slowly, painfully, the day wore to noon, and noon to dark again.

I lit the lamps and stirred the fire once more. The nurse looked in with tired face. The fire glowed, the lamps shone, but it was cold and dark in my heart.

Why did the White Angel tarry? Did he not know that we were waiting? Did he not understand that two pure hearts would sing for joy at the rustling of his wings? Had not God told him that we were kind, and pure, and clean? Why did He hold him back? Why not send him to sing a "Glory to God in the highest" on our little plain? Did He not care? Did He not see that we were weary with waiting and smitten with pain?

And, even as I mused, suddenly I heard the noise of hurrying footsteps overhead. Then—the sound of a tiny voice crying in the night.

The White Angel had come.

What a deep, marvellous thing is this

mystery of child-bearing! Poets and prophets, kings and queens, simple and noble, all who would add to the life of the world, are forced to face it. Alone, or with the bracing cheer of a friend, we men look on. Upstairs, the women wait for the angels. In hope, and fear, and trembling, we listen for the footsteps overhead. In hope, and joy, and expectation, they wait for the angels. Clear as the day and dark as the night is the coming of a little child. Simple as the tiny voice crying in the upper room is the way of Nature, but subtle as the deep calling to the deep is the advent of Life.

As I heard that tiny voice crying in the night, I knew all this; and understood, also, that life had deepened and a new island had risen from the sea. All round it the tides of life were surging. All over it the birds of love were calling. Not only had a child been born in the room, a new man had been born within.

RED, RED ROSE

Deep, strange feelings stirred within me. Solemn, beautiful thoughts waked to life. This was my child, bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh. It called to me. The wind that comes from the dawn told me a life immortal had begun. The word that comes with the golden light upon it whispered that in this soul my soul should dwell, beautiful, unspeakable.

Ah! little white girl crying in the dark, you woke in me the sleeping gifts of fatherhood. We took you for a boy, and had not even a name ready for you, yet you brought us endless joy. We thought of you as "he," and spoke of you as "he," but you proved yourself a flower, with gold in your heart and every petal white, and we gave to you the fair, sweet name "Marguerite." And, with your white and gold, you have made our garden, and our home, and our hearts fairer far than else had been.

CHAPTER NINE

THE ROSES OF MY GARDEN

Being a description of my roses, especially the Red, Red Roses, that grew in My Garden, with a note on the cradling of Marguerite under the apple-trees and by the Red Rose beds.

SONG OF THE ROSE

"If Zeus chose us a king of the flowers in his mirth,
He would call to the rose and would royally crown it;
For the rose, ho, the rose! is the grace of the earth,
Is the light of the plants that are growing upon it!
For the rose, ho, the rose! is the eye of the flowers,
Is the blush of the meadows that feel themselves fair,
Is the lightning of beauty, that strikes through the bowers
On pale lovers that sit in the glow unaware.
Ho, the rose breathes of love! ho, the rose lifts the cup
To the red lips of Cypris invoked for a guest!
Ho, the rose having curled its sweet leaves for the world,
Takes delight in the motion its petals keep up,
As they laugh to the Wind as it laughs from the west!"

Attributed to SAPPHO.

CHAPTER NINE THE ROSES OF MY GARDEN

THERE WERE ALL shades of roses in My Garden, red and white, pink and yellow, and I would not be without one of them, but the Red, Red Roses were its glory. White I love, or I would not have given Marguerite that white name; and yellow, or I would not have given her that golden sign ; and pink as I love the blushes that lie on her cheek when warm in sleep—but the Red, Red Roses were My Garden's boast. Not that I loved them any better, really, but merely that I specialised in red. Every other shade and hue you care to name is represented—cream, ivory, lemon, chrome, saffron, apricot, fawn, buff, copper, salmon, bronze, blush, flesh-pink, peach, cerise, coral, madder, vermilion, scarlet, carmine, claret, maroon, and amaranth—but it was in the reds, all shades and tones of red, and almost every shade

and turn of pink, that My Garden revelled. If I had time, and room, and money, I would specialise in others, too, but the Red, Red Roses claim my heart —they are likest my love. And, the deeper the red is, the deeper my love of them grows.

There were all kinds of roses in My Garden, too, a few of almost every sort —summer roses, that only bloom once in the year, Provençe, moss, damask, the old-fashioned white, pink, and red roses, hybrid China and Bourbons, sweet-briar, Boursalt, Wichurianas, and others—but the perpetual autumnal flowering roses I loved best. Summer and autumn they flower. I have cut them early in May and found them in bloom, in a sheltered place, late in November. Perpetuals, hybrid perpetuals and teas, these were the roses I favoured most; and every nook and corner of My Garden that would grow them I

brought into the joyous service of the Red, Red Rose.

I loved my roses for their own sake, but I loved them better for their human note. My Garden was lacking without love; when Gertrude came, it became lovelier than ever in my sight. My Garden was sweet with Gertrude, sweeter than I can tell you; when Marguerite came, it became sweeter still. From the first month, we wheeled her carriage into the garden, and laid her in the arms of the Great Mother. The first song of the birds in spring she heard, and the first blossom on the trees she saw. When the apples bloomed, we cradled her under the apple-trees. When the roses came, we wheeled her carriage there, and cradled her by the Red Rose beds. All summer and autumn, she drank in their fragrance. All during that tender, impressionable time, she opened her eyes to the vision of the roses, red and white,

pink and yellow, every shade and every hue, every kind and every shape, and drank in their fragrance and their beauty. And I loved them better because of their service to Marguerite. It was our hope, the hope of Gertrude's heart as well as mine, it is our hope still, that their beauty and fragrance would sink into her soul and shape her life in years to come. When she smiled in her sleep, we thought she was listening to the song of the thrush on the apple-tree. When she cooed in the sunlight, we fancied she was singing her hymn of praise. When she opened her great, beautiful hazel eyes, and gazed, for hours, on the roses of our garden, we believed the glory would enter in. "Some day, in years to come," we said, "they will make fragrant many a thought and beautify many a deed in the life of Marguerite." What do you think? Were we wrong? Dreaming merely? We think not. Already we

see it in her unfolding.

Now, for my list. We have climbing roses and ramblers, standard roses and dwarf, single and full, cabbage and buttonhole, fairy roses and Scottish roses, roses blooming on pergolas and clinging to walls, but we love them best in beds, all of one kind together or in glorious rivalry side by side. Among the hybrid tea roses, we have the Ecarlate, a lovely deep red tint, a charming shade, beautiful in bud and with considerable fulness in flower; the Meteor, a very deep red, and a Red, Red Rose indeed, with great fulness in flower, and (unlike most roses) better in full flower than in bud; Charles J. Grahame, a sweet rose, when half out especially, and a beautiful deep red colour; the Aurora, a lovely little rose with good fulness for its size, and a very fine shade of red; Liberty, a most beautiful, ravishing red rose, lovely in bud and in early stage of flower, but with little body

in it, and lacking in fulness when in full bloom—a bed of these I have, and I can recommend them well; Lieutenant Chaure, a large bloom and a beautiful red, a most satisfying shade; Laurent Carle, a great beautiful rose, beautiful in bud, shape, and tone: like the Liberty rose, it has a charming curl in the outer petals in bud and when half-blown—it is a great joy to me, and I am glad, always, that I have a big bed of it; Königen Carola, a magnificent flower, beautiful in every way, a good shape, a lovely red, a most satisfying shade, a sweet curl both in bud and in flower, and with great body when fully out—I have a big bed of this, also, and I reckon it one of the greatest joys in My Garden; Gustave Grunerwald, a big red rose, beautifully shaped bud, with lovely curls in the outer petals, curling freely in full flower, a rose with much fulness in it, and, altogether, a very charming kind—I have a bed of this, also,

competing always for my heart with the Königen Carola; General Macarthur, a lovely deep red, one of the deepest and most satisfying of shades, in bud and in early flower especially a great delight to me and beautiful beyond all telling—to have a bed of these is to be rich for time and for eternity; Mrs R. G. Sharman-Crawford, a beautiful rose in itself and free flowering; Comtesse Icy Hardegg, not so full in body or deep in shade as the Laurent Carle, but a very fine rose all the same; Richmond, a lovely, ravishing red rose, very deep in bud and very beautiful in full flower—I count myself happy in having a glorious bed of this most delightful bloom; The Dandy, a little gem, a deep red satisfying shade, beautiful in bud and in half-flower, and, even in full bloom, a joy to heart and eye; W. E. Lippiatt, John Ruskin, and many others. Crimson, maroon, vermilion, scarlet, carmine, claret, some of these roses

may be, but all of them I call red roses, and every one of them worthy of a place in My Garden.

Of the hybrid tea rose, in various shades of pink, some almost red, some pale as the cheek of a sleeping child, I have the following, all of which, also, I can recommend:—Lyon rose, a lovely, big rose, with charming shade of pink, almost salmon tone, with the warmth of flesh in it, as of a beautiful girl hot with running; Mdlle. Augustine Guinoisseau, red in bud, very pale flesh-coloured pink in bloom, with a lovely curl on the outer petals and a most pleasing fulness, though inferior to La France in shape and size; Lady Ashtown, the buds of which are jewels in shape, shade, and curl: it grows to great size, flowers freely, and will never fail to satisfy all the autumn through—I have a bed of them, and I count them one of the best roses in My Garden; Homer, lovely in bud and

in bloom, in foliage and in flower, and, altogether, a charming little rose that takes my fancy well; La Tosca, a bigger bloom and more ambitious 'doer,' but not any more satisfying or more beautiful; Lady Pirrie, a specially charming rose, with lovely big petals and most graceful curls and the sweetest shade imaginable, a rose of much distinction and dignity, and fit to hold up its face to any lover—one bed is not enough for me, I must have two; Clara Watson, a big rose, lovely shade of pink, and free flowering; Viscountess Folkestone, a very large bloom, full bodied, as large as the Caroline Testout and as taking in every way, free flowering and easy to grow; Grace Darling, Mrs W. J. Grant, Marchioness of Londonderry, and a few others.

These are the pinks and reds among my hybrid teas. I have others; and they are so beautiful that I must name them, too. I have La France, of course, one of

the princesses of the kingdom, without which no garden is complete; Lady Augusta Victoria, a lovely cream with a touch of lemon in it; White Killarney, cream in bud, the flower as if it had just been kissed with the lips of a blushing girl; Lady Moyra Beauclerc, large blooms, beautifully shaped and lovely tint: I reckon it one of the best that grows; Madame Mélanie Soupert, a beautiful yellow bloom, large in size but with not too much fulness of body, fit to keep company with White Killarney and Lady Moyra; Bessie Brown, a cream white, with blooms that hang their heads as if too heavy for their stalks, very large petals with a curl in them such as I love; Dean Hole, one of the finest hybrids in My Garden and one of the best roses ever grown—I must have a bed of this before the curfew toll; Mildred Grant, another lovely gift from Ireland, one of the most beautiful shaped roses I have, of good size,

cream white touched with the blushing cheek of a bride, or sometimes white as a virgin's veil, in every way a most lovely rose; Marquise de Sinety, a sweet orange colour, its exquisite tone at once appealing to heart and eye and making me put it down in the best-loved page of life; Earl of Warwick, a flesh-coloured rose with a touch of salmon in it, of good shape in bud and flower, and one that blooms late into the autumn; White Lady, a lovely white rose, of good shape and growth; Mamie, Mrs David M'Kee, and a score of others, every rose among them beautiful in its time.

Of the hybrid perpetuals proper I have, perhaps, fifty or sixty, but must not name you more than a few. Among them is John Hopper, a good little red rose, but without much body or fulness; Madame Gabriel Luizet, a lover of summer only, a little fuller than John Hopper, and a good bloomer, but not very

big; Hippolyte Jamain, a big red rose and deep in shade; Helen Keller, rosy cerise in colour, with large blooms, and among the best grown when at its best; Paul Neyron, a big red rose that takes my eye and gives me much satisfaction; Ulrich Brunner its seedling, a Red, Red Rose indeed, and one of the best that grows in any garden; Mrs John Laing, a pink beauty, and reckoned one of the best half-dozen roses out; Clio, a large pale pink lady; Victor Hugo, a glowing crimson, flowering freely summer and autumn, and arresting attention where-ever found; Her Majesty, a favourite summer rose, shy of flowering in the autumn of the year, but of good size and loving the hottest part of the garden; Frau Karl Druschki, a pure snow-white lady, and as lovely as pure, beautiful in shape, in curl, and in fulness, and one of the roses I love best; Duke of Wellington, a deep dark crimson rose, free in

its flowering and lasting late into the autumn, strong and pleasing as the noble Duke himself; Alfred K. Williams, of good shape and colour, beautiful at its best and reliable in every way, but not strong, and requiring much care; Hugh Dickson, a lovely crimson rose with a touch of scarlet in it, flowering freely with little care, and giving of its beauty with lavish grace: I find it one of the finest perpetuals in My Garden; Prince Arthur, White Baroness, Louis Van Houtte, Catherine Soupert, Baronne Prévost, Victor Verdier, Marchioness of Dufferin, and a number of others. All of these may be found in My Garden of the Red, Red Rose, and they are enough to give glory to any garden under the sun.

These were the roses of My Garden. My friend Foster-Melliar would have smiled at them, and many good Rosarians will look in vain for many of their

favourites. But I grew them for their own sake, not for show; and the tender, delicate kinds I could not bear. Never yet have I sent a rose to an exhibition. Never will. I keep them for my lady's hair, and for my home's gladdening, for My Garden's glory, and for Marguerite to drink of their fragrance while she sleeps.

Truly I love my roses. Heaven must have feared, methinks, I loved them overmuch. For, one day, as I stood with Gertrude among them, and watched Marguerite in her sleep, an angel came to me in My Garden.

"What sayest thou?" he said. "Whether wouldest thou have thy roses, or thy Passion Flower, or thy Marguerite?"

And I answered, with fear:

"Take my roses, every one of them. But leave me, oh, leave me, my Passion Flower and my Marguerite!"

And the angel smiled.

And, next day, I had a present of a few perpetuals I have not named, started another bed, and went on my way rejoicing.

Roses I love, red and pink, white and yellow, love them well, but my Passion Flower and my Marguerite more than all the roses in the world.

CHAPTER TEN

THE GARDEN OF THE MARQUIS

In which I tell of the great garden of an ancient Earl, compare its glory with mine, describe his desolate Hall, and mark, for you, the heartbreaking life of the old Earl's son.

"There was never mystery
But 'tis figured in the flowers;
Was never secret history
But birds tell it in the bowers."

EMERSON.

CHAPTER TEN THE GARDEN OF THE MARQUIS

IT IS THE BIGGEST GARden I have ever seen. And the grandest, too. I do not speak of public or royal gardens, and I cannot compare it with many titled places, only with my own little garden. It stands in front of the old ancestral Hall of the noble family, and is sheltered from every wind that blows by the trees of the Park. Five miles of oak fencing and many a mile of woods surround the Garden and Hall. The place was laid out by a famous man, many years ago, and there cannot be any doubt that, at its best, it is fit for any Earl in the land. But, in my day, it was not at its best, and the Marquis seldom dwelt in the Hall. Yet the old place retained something of its splendour, and was cared for enough to show what it might have been.

The Marquis was an old man, with the best of his years gone. A good man,

"THE MARQUIS IN HIS GARDEN"

generosity and goodness, and then faded as a flower. When the Marquis laid her to sleep there were few who did not weep with him. Another married a soldier, went abroad with him, and came home a widow—only a year or two after their marriage bells. Few, again, who did not give their hands to the old Marquis. A third married a clergyman, and graced with her presence a Yorkshire vicarage; while yet another wed a gentleman, strong and clean of soul, and loving the simple life: methinks, these were the happiest of all. Three sons of the Marquis gave themselves to the army and navy, while the eldest gave himself to the dance. A Lieutenant of Militia for a while, he forsook even that for the skirt and the stage, and danced in two continents to the glory of his ancestral name. Few, again, but sorrowed with the Marquis for his son's sake. And, when the little Marchioness died, and sorrow

was added to sorrow, and his Hall was left unto him desolate, there were none in all the countryside, methinks, but pitied the poor old Marquis.

The Hall was well placed on undulating ground, and commanded a fine view of all the country round. Not remarkable for any architectural grace, it was redeemed from poverty of ornament by a lovely broad terrace built on the sloping ground in front. On the walls of the terrace grew many an old and beautiful creeper, covering almost every inch of masonry and clustering most thickly round the broad steps that led to the gardens below. Wistaria (its trunk almost as thick as my body), clematis of all kinds, ampelopsis, ivy, and many other creepers made the old wall and the terrace steps a picture of beauty from early summer to late autumn. In the French Gardens to which the broad steps led, were beds of every kind and

shape, with intervening lawns and ornamental vases, and flowers from every country under the sun. Below these terraced gardens, again, were the tennis courts, and the rose gardens, and the shrubberies. Beyond these, in turn, and stretching all round, the Park, with countless herds of deer. Behind the Hall, a quarter of a mile away, were the glass-houses and the fruit gardens.

Almost every flower you like to name was in the garden of the Marquis. It was not often I was privileged to walk there, but, often as I came, I found something new and something beautiful to admire. Lovely patches of cyclamen grew among the trees, and all manner of spring flowers could be seen in the woods. Beside an old yew, there was a clump of anemones and daffodils growing in fairest contrast against the dark background. The Marquis often stood here, looking away beyond the sea of anemones into the dark

woods, dark thoughts, methinks, crowding his heart. He loved rich colour and had a fine eye for beautiful contrasts, grouping his flowers and shrubs and trees in such a way that spring, summer, autumn, and winter each made a contribution to the glory of the other. To see the daffodils and forget-me-nots with their blue and gold among the green against the dark brown trunks of the half-bare trees was to feel that an artist was at work in the garden of the Marquis. To come across acres of blue-bells and white narcissi growing together under and around a beech wood just bursting into tender green was to know that the old Marquis had his pleasures. To mark a well-filled border of purple irises, Welsh poppies, and Columbines at the roots of a hundred elms, green, mauve, yellow, white, against the deep frowning background, was to understand that a wizard was at work. To stand beside the lake with

the arum-lilies growing round the edge and the white swan riding on the water was to find a summer-picture for the heart's gladdening. And to meet with clumps of yucca and pampas, clematis and roses, hollyhocks and tropæolum, gladioli and tritoma, Michaelmas daisies and aster sinensis, cyclamen and erigeron, amaryllis belladonna and zephyranthes, and mark their changing glory of flower and leaf, summer and autumn through, was to be persuaded that life, after all, is sweet. Yet the shadow of the young Earl's life hung over the garden, and one could not help knowing how dark it made the world for the old Marquis. Once I met him in the garden unawares. He smiled as he passed; but his feet were heavy, and his heart was far away.

In the hothouses grew every manner of tropical herb, with many tropical fruits, and vines of all sorts, grape, fig,

peach, and apricot. In these, also, were forced the choicest flowers for the table of the noble Marquis and all kinds of table plants and decorations for his gladdening. Night and day, perhaps a score of gardeners and attendants saw to the fruits and vines, the choice flowers and tender plants. A Scotsman, from a great garden in the North, was the presiding genius, and many a clever hint could he give one. To walk through the vineries and see the luscious fruits was to make the mouth water. To see the fine display of choice flowers was almost to envy the lot of the old Marquis. To stand entranced before some of the marvellous decorations for the table was to long almost for great possessions. And to pass from the hothouses into the fern-houses and come on every kind of maiden-hair, royal fern, and ferns such as the great only possess, was to feel how small was the heaven into which we had entered

and know there were other heavens.

In the rose gardens, there were all the perpetuals, hybrid perpetuals, and hybrid teas that I had in my own garden, and many others that I could not hope to rear. In addition, new realms of the rose were added, to which, in my tiny garden, I could not even aspire. There were moss roses, gentifolia, Bourbon, hybrid Bourbon, Polyantha, Boursalt, Lawrencia, Californica, Wichuriana, China, hybrid briar, Provence, Romanas, and, above all, teas, noisettes, and sweet tea-scented roses. Among the teas and noisettes, there were some of the most ravishing shapes and colours, and many that sent me home wishing that money and time and land were mine to grow them for my world's gladdening. Of these, I give first place to the white Maman Cochet, a white rose with a lemon tint in it that is simply ravishing in its beauty. Though I work in red, I must

confess that there are few red roses like this, and that the honours of the garden in three great kingdoms are with the white roses, the white Maman Cochet among teas, Mildred Grant among hybrid teas, and Frau Karl Druschki among hybrid perpetuals. Next to it, comes Madame Jules Gravereaux, a glorious rose that takes the heart of some even more than my white Maman Cochet. Running these close, are Ernest Metz, a lovely big rose that needs a lot of care and repays it a hundredfold; the Comtesse de Nadaillac, one of the very finest and surest of roses, with blooms that melt the heart of countless judges, and with shades of colour, varying from pink to yellow, that call for the fairest lady's breast; and Cleopatra, a rose as capricious as the queen who gave it its name, and as magnificent, too.

Of the other roses in the garden of the Marquis, I would name only The Bride,

a pure white rose, of great beauty, perfect in form and grace, and lovely as any bride at the altar: at her best, in perfect flower, rivalling even my white Maman; Catherine Mermet, her charming mother, though not so charming as her lovely daughter; Mrs Campbell Hall, a very rare rose, of exquisite shape and colour, free flowering, and with that lovely curl I love; Mrs Edward Mawley, a sweet-scented rose that blooms late into the autumn and never fails to give of its best: in size, shape, and colour it takes the heart of any lover, while its graceful wing-like petals make one think it has only come to rest in the garden and will soon take wing and flee away; Muriel Grahame, another daughter of Catherine Mermet, a pale cream child, lovely almost as The Bride; Sulphurea, a fine little rose, with little body in it but free flowering and lovely as free; William Allen Richardson, a flower that stands

by itself almost, because of its beautiful orange colour: it grew by itself, also, in the garden of the Marquis, clustering round an old pillar in the centre of the garden—I was glad I had a rival to it growing up an old wall in My Garden of the Red, Red Rose; Maréchal Niel, the finest yellow rose that grows, a great favourite with the old Marquis, and one that blooms freely in my own little garden too; and Souvenir de Pierre Notting, a cross between the Maréchal and Maman Cochet, and, surely, one of the most beautiful crosses in the kingdom of the roses, though not quite as lovely as my beautiful white Maman.

Besides these, there were hundreds more. I can hardly stop telling you about them: it was always hard to tear myself away from the rose garden of the old Marquis. White beds of hybrid noisettes, avenues of climbers and ramblers, great banks of Wichuriana, held

me in their power. The hybrid noisettes, especially—Baronne de Maynard, Olga Marix, Coquette des Blanches and Perle des Blanches, all white as a trembling bride,—held me with their white charms; while a great bank of Wichuriana—Gerbe, Paul Transon, La Perle, Rubra, Edmond Proust, Lady Gay, Gardenia, Ferdinand Roussel, Universal Favourite, Ruby Queen, Auguste Barbier, and Shower of Gold, all shades of pink, ruby, yellow, and gold—always laid me captive. The banks of Wichuriana roses were so arranged that they came out in order, one after the other, right round the clock, Gerbe and Paul flowering early in June, and Lady Gay not appearing till late in July. To watch them come out and to win their fragrance, all the summer long, was to smile for joy—and wish that I, too, had banks of Wichuriana and lovely beds of white noisettes.

Always, when I came from the garden of the Marquis, and saw my little garden, with ten roses for every hundred he possessed, I was tempted to fight against my lot. But, when I remembered the sorrow of the old Marquis, the burden lifted. And, when I saw Marguerite, holding her mother's hand, come toddling up the sunlit path, or, later, run to meet me at the garden gate, I knew of a truth where the wealth of life lies. It was in such a mood that I wrote my little poem "Choice," at once my Confession of Faith and *Apologia*.

CHOICE

I

"If from the wealth of the shriven years
And the power of yellow gold,
It were given to me, for my joy or tears,
To choose me the land I would hold,
I'd smile, "Tis well with the sun to
roam
And drink the fragrance of flowers,

But give me, oh give me, the hills of
home,
And a cot in this vale of ours.'

II

If from the glow of the southren lands
And the spell of moonlit seas,
There did fly to me all the feathered
bands
To sing to me, long as I please,
I'd smile, 'Fair are fine feathers, and fair
The notes of the sunlight kist,
But give me a thrush and its song so rare
And my life with joy shall be blist.'

III

If from the woods and the plains afar,
From the strength of living things,
I were asked to look with the morning-
star
On lion or leopard, for kings,
I'd smile, 'Yours, the leopard fierce and
strong,
The lion untamed as Death,
But give me a horse and a hunting song
And a ride on the open heath.'

IV

If from the splendour of human store,
Of glory, or hope, or fame,

I were offered love or raptures of lore,
Power, honour, lands, a great name,
I'd smile, 'Give me love, love that will lie
On my breast like dawn and tryst
Me till death, and I'll face the world, and die,
With a song on my lips to Christ.'"

Yes, "give me love." There is nothing in all the world like it. Love in the heart and a clean, sweet life in the soul, these are the greatest of all possessions. I knew it before, I know it still, but never did I feel it more than when I came back to My little Garden of the Red, Red Rose from the great garden of the poor, old Marquis.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

HOW I FOUND SOME "THISTLE-DOWN" IN MY GARDEN OF THE RED, RED ROSE

In which I describe the coming of my second child, Ronald, and tell the story of his merry ways, with some of his quaint sayings and childish doings in My Garden of the Red, Red Rose.

" Live all thy sweet life through,
Sweet Rose, dew-sprent,
Drop down thine evening dew
To gather it anew
When day is bright;
I fancy thou wast meant
Chiefly to give delight."

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

CHAPTER ELEVEN HOW I FOUND SOME "THISTLE-DOWN" IN MY GARDEN OF THE RED, RED ROSE

TWO YEARS AFTER Marguerite came, my second child was born.

Everything was different.

She came one dark winter evening, two days after Christmas, in the midst of a storm. He came one lovely autumn morning, in the middle of September, when the golden sun was shining on the garden, transfiguring every changing leaf. She came slowly: the White Angel was afraid to venture on the storm, to wet his wings. He came merrily: the doctor and I were at breakfast together when we heard the sound of footsteps overhead, then heard him calling. She was a girl. He was a boy.

Then, we were quite sure what was coming. This time, we were not.

Then, the doctor said:

"A lovely girl!" and handed her to the nurse.

"A girl?" cried Gertrude, sitting up in bed—"A girl? Whatever will Jamie say?"

This time, the doctor said:

"A boy!"

And Gertrude lay still, and said:

"Jamie will be pleased!"

Then, the doctor came downstairs, and said to me:

"You've got a lovely daughter!"

"A daughter!" I exclaimed, in bewilderment, and could scarcely believe him.

This time, he said:

"You've got a son!"

And I turned, and shook him by the hand.

Then, the widowed queen came to me, with tears in her eyes, and said:

'You're not disappointed, are you,

Jamie? Never mind, my boy! She's a girl in a thousand!"

And I didn't care a bit for ten thousand girls, only wanted one boy.

"A girl in a thousand," she said, proudly. "She weighs eleven pounds! Only one child in a thousand weighs eleven pounds!"

And it took me three days to wake to the pride of having a child that weighed eleven pounds! Yet, she was the loveliest, cosiest, warmest little girl in all the world.

This time, the widowed queen came to me, with smiles all over her face, and said:

"You've got a son, my boy! You are pleased, aren't you?"

And I drew the kind soul to my breast, and kissed her.

Then, I was in no hurry to go upstairs, save for Gertrude's sake.

This time, I was eager to see my son,

as eager as to see Gertrude.

Then, I opened my eyes in wonder and took her to my heart right away. She was so lovely, so cosy, so warm.

This time, I opened my eyes in amazement and held my breath in awe. He was so long, and lean, and red.

Then, everybody said:

"What a lovely girl!"

This time, people looked at him, and said—nothing. Or smiled, faintly, and remarked:

"A big boy, isn't he?"

Or,

"A long fellow, eh?"

Or,

"He *is* thin!"

Or,

"He'll have to fill up!"

Or,

"How red he is!"

Or,

"Did you ever see the like?"

But, Aunt Dora, with cheering kindness, came to our rescue.

"Have you never heard the story of the ugly duckling?" she asked. "He'll be a fine boy yet. You wait!"

We waited.

She was right.

He grew up a fine boy.

Three days after he came, Marguerite drove up with her second mother to have her first sight of him. I took her by the hand and led her upstairs. He was lying on his mother's arm, his face against her breast. I lifted the clothes aside and let her peep in. Immediately she let my hand go.

"Beeby! Beeby!" she cried, and put her white hand on his.

Immediately the red baby fingers closed on Marguerite's. Her eyes danced with joy. The blood rushed to her cheeks. She felt him cling to her.

"Beeby! Beeby!" she cried, delight-

ed, and leaned over and kissed him. His face was as soft as thistle-down to Marguerite.

She was pleased with her baby brother. She took him to her life right away—the first to love him at first sight. And, still, she has him by the hand. Still, stands by him. Still, is pleased with her brother.

He turned out a sunny-hearted boy, the merriest, cheeriest boy you can imagine. From early morn till bedtime he was in the garden, a bit of sunshine wherever he was. Cooing or sleeping, singing or playing, digging or shouting, he was the life of the house and the joy of us all. There was no end to his merriment; his little feet, and brain, and hands, and tongue, were busy the whole day long; and he had the happiest of smiles, the brownest of faces, the kindest, softest heart in the world. He was his mother over again, the same brown eyes,

the same gold light in them, the same sunny-hearted ways, and as loving as loving could be.

As a child, we carried him into the garden, from the first month, and cradled him under the apple-trees and by the Red, Red Roses, as we had done with Marguerite before him. As a boy, he ran all over the place, from the first day his legs would carry him. The front door was always kept open. And, in the summer, when the nurse took him from our room in the morning, he would run away from her in his nightdress, laughing as he ran, out into the garden, on to the lawn, or round where the Red Roses grew; while at night he would try to evade her again, and rush out, in his nightdress once more, to get his last sight of the garden he loved so well, or to say "good night" to the old thrush singing on the apple-tree.

All day long they lived in the gar-

den, and at night went to sleep with their windows wide open and the fragrance and song of the garden stealing round them. On a branch of the greengage tree I made a swing for them, and here they chiefly played. Near this were their own little gardens, where they planted, and sowed, and watered to their hearts' content. Not far from the greengage, too, was the great hole that Ronald dug to make a well for himself. Day after day, for months, he took his little spade and digged for water. There was no tiring of him. He was on the move the whole day long, working or playing at full speed almost every hour of the day. To keep him employed would have been a task for a seer, but we found him a sunny-hearted nurse, just fresh from school, a girl as bright and merry as himself, who loved him almost as much as we did, and played with him like a child; and with her—Dorothy—and

Marguerite he was as happy as the day is long.

In everything that concerns a man Ronald early showed interest, and everything his father did appealed to him strongly. Before he could toddle he drew to me, and before I knew, he had wound a big gold chain round my heart. Gertrude used to say that she fed him and had all the bother with him while I had all the pleasure. Whenever I appeared in the garden, he held out his hands for me, and whenever I went away there were sure to be tears. One day, when he was little more than seven months old, I got a new cycle, and nothing would do but I must put on a little seat on the crossbar between my arms and the handle-bar for Marguerite. He could not toddle, was still in Gertrude's arms, but whenever I put Marguerite on the cycle-seat, and went off with her for a ride round the Evesham Road, he

cried like to break his heart. But when I came back, and took him, dancing, from his mother's arms and put him on the cycle-seat, and went off with him, tied with a towel to the handle-bar to keep him from falling, he was radiant. The tears dried, the light danced in his eyes, smiles chased each other all over his face, his world became a heaven again, and he the happiest boy in it.

Another day, when he was only about a year old, I took him by train to the great city. There was some little thing the matter with him, and Gertrude had not strength to take him to the specialist alone. So his father took him, carrying him in his arms through the crowded streets and bringing him home in the starlight. It was a great day for Ronald, and it lived long in his little mind. For many days afterwards he appointed me his nurse, and wanted to go with me wherever I went, and could not

understand why I could not take him with me every day. No. Don't be alarmed. There was little the matter with him, and he soon was all right again.

Another day, I was working in the garden. It was haytime, and the men were busy carrying in the fields. Our farmer-friend at Fordham Hall was busiest of all. Ronald saw him when we went for the milk together, he on Marguerite's cycle-seat. The gift of imitation was deep within him. He must play. At what? "Haying," of course. He was a man in the fields. I was Mr Fordham. He would run and fetch a handful of grass and sing to me:

"Mr Fordham, I allus go a-haying." Then off to another bit of the garden for another handful of grass, and back to me singing:

"Mr Fordham, I allus go a-haying." Then off again for another handful, and back to me, singing louder than ever:

"Mr Fordham, I allus go a-haying." And, so on, for an hour I should think, playing and singing, and working as hard at his game as any man "a-haying" in the fields. I only had to say "Oh," or "Really," or "You are a good hayer," or "Thank you," or "That's a splendid lot," each time he came, to keep him going hard.

I always called him my "little man," and he used to tell people with pride that he was "favah's little man." "Poor man," Marguerite would say, pityingly, when he came to grief in the garden. And "Puir wee man," his grandma would say, with a tear in her eye. For she, too, loved him dearly. And so, from early days, he was called a man, and began to play the man, and came to be known as "Mr Man" by his father and mother, Marguerite and grandma, and all his bosom friends.

It was about this time, when he was scarcely two, that he began coming into

our bed in the morning. He was good to lie in his cot in the corner till the maids came down, only asking, now and again, with a voice of quiet entreaty:

"Muvver, is it time? Is it time, muvver?"

But when the maids came down, he knew it was time, and would slip out of his cot in a second, and come into father's bed for a cuddle. He was so loving and affectionate, he dearly loved a cuddle, and could scarcely bear to be alone. If father was heavy with sleep, and he had to go to the nursery before he waked up, his heart was near to breaking. And so, you can understand, his father waked to the heroics of his "little man."

To be "like father" was the great joy of his life. In the garden he would get a spade "like father," and dig "like father," and attempt to lift things "just like father." In the house, he would walk "like father," and write "like father,"

and talk "just like father." But his cuddle in the morning, and his little chat with father in his father's bed, were, perhaps, the happiest moments of his day.

Very early, he spied my trousers lying on the chair by the bedside. He always smiled when he saw them: he was thinking of the day when he would wear trousers "just like father." And one morning he smiled, very broadly, as if a new idea had struck him, leaned over the bed, took the braces, and pulled them into bed. The proud heart of his father understood the proud thought of his boy, and made him unbutton the braces and give them to Ronald. Ronald sat up and flung them over his shoulders, and cried for very joy:

"Look muvver! Look! Just like favah!"

It was too great a joy only to be tasted once. Every morning after that, for a good long time, he smiled the same proud smile, leaned over, and pulled the

braces into bed. And his father, who liked it quite as much as his "little man," would unbutton them, and go shares in the joy that spread over Ronald's face when he flung the braces over his night-dress, and cried:

"Look muvver! Look! Just like favah!"

And so it came to pass that I promised him a pair of braces when he was a big boy. For days, weeks rather, he carried himself very proudly, and told Marguerite, and mother, and the maids, and grandma, and everybody who came to the garden gate:

"I'se going to have some braces. Favah said it."

When once the braces were promised, it was not long before the vision of trousers dawned. Gertrude and I were divided between a desire to have a little man in trousers and pain at parting with a little boy in petticoats. We went together and bought him the braces. It was a great

day in our life as well as Ronald's. Some things have a value far beyond their shop price; it was so with Ronald's first manning. The price of the braces was $2\frac{3}{4}$d., but they were the first pair of our first boy; and they had a value, in our eyes, far beyond this. You should have seen him trying them on, their bright colours dazzling his mind, his sense of possession filling his eyes with pride! "Life played out," you say? I tell you, it was just beginning.

Gertrude made the trousers herself, would not think of buying them, far less of letting any other hand make them. There was great excitement cutting them out and trying them on, and, when they were being tried on and only half finished, the "little man" was so carried away with the pride of so great a possession that the house could not contain him, and he ran out and scampered and danced on the lawn, looking at his

trousered legs all the time, and shouting for joy. The sight was so funny that I laughed till the tears came—whether for gladness in having a little trousered man, or for sorrow in losing a petticoated child, I cannot tell even to this day.

On his third birthday he wore them for the first time. It was Sunday, and he went in them to church. He ran into Big Father's House in front of Marguerite, passed our seat in his excitement, and was half way up the aisle when Marguerite went after him and caught him by the place where she had always held his petticoats.

"Marguerite, you naughty girl," he cried, to the consternation of the people. "Don't touch my tousers!"

No one enjoyed this escapade better than our good friend Mrs Stamford Hill, from London. She was in church that day and came to tea with us on

Monday. She sat beside Ronald, little knowing what was coming. Had she known she might have gone to town hurriedly. The glory of his possessions was still upon him, and he was anxious for the welfare of others. So, in the middle of tea, up he hauled his little white jersey and showed her his braces.

"Have you got any braces, Mrs Hill?" asked he.

"No!" she screamed.

She was a married lady, very motherly, unaffected, and kind, yet mother and father held their breath. But, sure enough, out it came:

"Mrs Hill, have you got any tousers?"

And up went our hands in horror.

A merry, sunny-hearted boy was Ronald, simple and eager as a child, well-mannered and pleasing, generous and kind, and, oh, so affectionate and loving. To all of us loving, to father and mother, grandma and Dorothy, but

to none more than Marguerite. To see them together was the joy of my life. To watch how he clung to her was the hope of my heart. And to mark how she took his hand and ran with him all over the garden was the pride of my days.

Ah, little Trouser Man, so long as you hold that hand you are safe, so long as you cling to Marguerite it shall be well with you. But, the day you let it go, your fight will begin. Then—God help you, Ronald, my boy.

CHAPTER TWELVE

GRANDMA IN MY GARDEN OF THE RED, RED ROSE

An idyll of an old Scottish lady, dear to heart and memory, with a note on her humours, traits, and loves, and a picture of her walking in the peace and quiet of My Garden, a red rose in her hand.

" That garden sweet, that Lady fair,
And all sweet shapes and odours there,
In truth have never passed away:
'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed; not they."

SHELLEY.

CHAPTER TWELVE
GRANDMA IN MY GARDEN OF THE RED, RED ROSE

SHE WAS AT HER BEST IN the garden, sitting in the sunshine on the lawn, telling stories to Gertrude and Dorothy, or walking alone up and down the sunlit path, a red rose in her hand. Threescore years and ten lay behind her, and yet not a grey hair was on her head. Lovely black tresses they were, even at threescore years and ten, and beautiful in lustre and abundance to the last. A hard and strenuous life she had lived, and seen many sorrows, yet her spirit was not broken, or her sight poor, or her hearing dull, or her jet-black tresses streaked with one grey hair. She was proud of her black hair: and when Gertrude patted it, or arranged it for her, and admired it, she would smile as pleased as a girl about it, and tell of the days when it fell three feet down her back and was the joy of

her husband and children.

She always wore black, for her husband had not long passed. But, over her black dress, she wore a white woollen shawl that was the care of her heart. On great days, like Christmas or New Year, or when something special was on, she would wear a white silk shawl that her son had brought from Malta for her; but, on common days, it was always a white knitted woollen shawl, a smaller one for mornings and a grander one for evenings. On her black hair she wore a white lace cap. It was of Buckinghamshire lace, and was made up for her always by Gertrude. To say that it was the pride of her eye or a pleasant thing to her thought would be to put it quietly. It had to be made just so. A little too high or a little low, and she didn't like it. Just right, and she was as pleased, quietly pleased, as anyone could be. It was a great day in her week, not with-

out its anxieties or cares, when her white shawls were washed and her white lace caps were undone and washed by Gertrude's own hand. She would walk round the garden and come to the line to see that the shawls were all right, and she would sit by Gertrude in the evening to watch her iron the lace and make up her caps again, all her wits about her, and as eager and interested and keen as woman can be. When, at last, they were washed, and ironed, and made up again, and were "just right," not too high and not too low, she was the proudest, happiest lady for many a mile round.

If her cap and shawl gave her much contentment, they were more than equalled by her pride in her white lace tie. It was first put on her in a moment of lightness, and she liked it really, but thought it a little bit of vanity and scarcely liked to wear it so soon after her husband's passing. But we did not wish her mind to

brood on this, and Gertrude persuaded her into trying one. It took a lot of persuasion, for she was brave and true of soul, and did not take naturally to the lighter joys of life. But, once she was persuaded, she would never be without it, and was not satisfied till she had two or three ties each alike. They were made of lovely soft lace, trimmed with a choice bit of Buckinghamshire point, a present to her from Gertrude. Gertrude made them for her, and washed and ironed them for her, and made them up, again and again, to her scarce concealed delight.

On state occasions, when she wore her black silk dress, her white shawl and cap and tie, she was as proudly pleasing to us as she was quietly pleasing to herself. Her silk dress was so good that it could "stand by itself," and everything she had was of the same good quality. She would not wear anything except it was "guid," and would never be satisfied except with

"the best." When a thing was "rael guid," she was deeply and sincerely pleased. When it could be said it was "the best," her mind was satisfied. When it was not "guid," it was not for her, however much it might please "feckless bodies"; and, when it was not "the best," anyone else could have it but it would not "enter her door." Her black silk dress was "the best," fit for any state occasion, and her white shawl and cap and tie were "rael guid," and so her mind was pleased and her eye contented.

She came to us from a great northern city, amid the noise and smoke of which she had spent almost all her threescore years and ten. She came to us wounded and sore, after a long fight with pain and sorrow and death. She came, when the last bird had flown from the nest and her husband had been laid to sleep, baffled in desire, beaten in prayer, and in need of healing. Everything was so quiet and

peaceful in the Garden of the Red, Red Rose, that she sighed and drank in healing at every breath. She could feel the silence and the peace and the beauty of the scene; and its quietness even more than its fragrance ministered to her healing. She would walk in the garden, in the golden noon, and say it was like Heaven. She would walk down the sunlit path, when the long-drawn shadows of eventide lay at her feet, and say it was like Paradise. She would sit on the lawn in the afternoon, or away round by the rose beds, reading, or brooding, or thinking, sometimes turning her head sideways to listen to the song of a bird, sometimes lifting her face to the sky, sometimes letting her eyes linger on some beautiful flower, a picture of rest. Every morning, and last thing at night, she would go to the mint bed and pick a leaf, or to the rose beds and pick a red rose, and pass on, bruising her bit of mint and drink-

ing its odour, or carrying her red rose in her hand and lifting it often to enjoy its fragrance. Never a day, the whole summer long, but she had her red rose, and would sit or walk in the garden so quietly, so slowly, so peacefully, that one could see she was at rest. And, never did I see her and watch her in the garden bruising her bit of mint between her forefinger and thumb, or lifting her red rose to her lips, but I smiled and was glad—so glad, sometimes, that the tears came up from the deeps, and filled my eyes, and lay on my face like a benediction. She had fought a clean, brave fight, and the mint was her laurel and the rose her crown.

She seldom ventured out of the garden, only on Christmas Day, or some special occasion, finding pleasure and contentment enough in its quiet, its peace and joy. The wealth of fruit-trees in the garden and in the orchards all round was a constant source of wonder

and pleasure to her. From spring to autumn she would watch the apple and plum trees, stand in awe of the sea of blossom, watch the fruit form and swell and ripen, and imagine what the crowds of her northern city would think if only they could see the glory. And when the fruit fell from the trees, so ripe and luscious and plenteous that we could not use it all, and could not find a soul that would say "Thank you" for it, she would open her eyes in wonder and think, pitifully, of the poor in the great cities who would have feasted on it with joy.

Away round by the hawthorn hedge, beyond the mint bed and the roses, was a favourite spot of hers. Sitting or standing here, or walking slowly up and down the sunlit path, she could look over the low hawthorn hedge, across the fields and the great Valley beyond, and see the Cotswold Hills, seven or eight miles away. I have seen her stand by the haw-

thorn hedge for hours, looking away across the Valley, and watching the lights and shadows on the distant hills. They always drew her, seemed to call to her, spoke to something deep and sacred in her life, wooed her, won her. For, they carried her on the wings of memory to the hills of home and set her down by the quiet waters of the northern Kyles where her happiest years were spent and her children were cradled, sung to sleep by the lapping of the waters and waking to the vision of the great hills. After that, a handful of happy, fruitful years, the great city called her to its toil and joy and sorrow. And, now, she lived among the hills again, near enough to watch the lights and shadows on them, far enough to hear their still, deep voice calling; and she listened, and watched, and was young again—with a big, strong man by her side and children by her knee. Little won-

GRANDMA IN THE GARDEN

had Gertrude's eyes and Gertrude's ways, and, when he came and sat on her knee, or played at her feet, and loved her with his big, kind, generous, passionate love, she loved him with all her heart, and looked kindly on Gertrude too.

She admired Marguerite, and was never tired of pointing out her goodness: she had a deep consciousness of satisfaction in her virtues, her love of justice and fairplay, her true and quiet thoughtfulness, her kind and considerate ways. But, she loved Ronald, with something of his own warm, simple love, and a note of pathos added. "Puir wee lamb," she would say when any hurt came his way, or when he would climb on her knee and kiss her fondly, or play at her feet and bid her play with him. Somehow, she fancied that we loved Marguerite more, and that, when we laughed at Ronald's merry ways, we laughed at him. Then, she would pat him on the

head or stoop down and kiss him, saying, "Puir wee lamb!"—a note of protest and pity in her voice. Everything he did seemed to please her, and every fault of his day she tried to cover. Even when he ran round the garden in his frolics, and pulled off the flowers' heads as he ran (a thing, of course, he was not allowed to do), she would go after him, and pick up the flowers, and hide them, to save him from punishment. Yet, she was full of stories as to how she chastised her own boys in their folly!

When Ronald got his first pair of combinations, and would undress, and try them on by the dining-room fire, and looked the funniest, oddest, happiest little fellow you ever saw, we laughed a merry laugh. Grandma could not help laughing too, but above the laughter was the note of pity, "Puir wee lamb!" When the room was too small for him, and he sprang through the door, ran to the lawn,

and capered up and down the lawn in the sunshine, his pink combinations his only covering (and as proud of them as a king of his purple and his crown), we laughed our fill. Grandma could not keep from laughing either, but, again, it was "Puir wee man!"

To her fell the task of darning the children's stockings. She loved it as much for her own sake as the children's: it gave her something to do. Like a true Scottish lady of the old school, she liked to finish everything by Saturday night and feel that all was ready for the enjoyment of the Sabbath. To manage this, she often used to work hard and put everything away before the evening fell. And it happened, on one such occasion, while Ronald played in the room, that grandma turned round to Gertrude, and said:

"There! I've finished! I haven't a single hole left!"

Whereupon, Ronald, unperceived, and thinking in his simple kind way to give her pleasure, sat down at her feet, pulled off his shoe, and picked a big hole in his stocking.

"Here you are, grandma," he said, with pride and pity. "Here's a hole for you!"

Grandma laughed and laughed till the tears came, but never a word of anger and never a tap escaped her, only "Oh sirse the day!" and "Puir wee lamb!"

You should have seen her bedroom on a Saturday evening when we entered to bid her good night. Her Sabbath dress was laid out on one chair (the same chair always), with her velvet mantle, and black bonnet with clean white strings. By the chair stood her Sunday boots and best umbrella. On the table lay her hymn-book and Bible, with her glasses on the top of the Bible. And by the side of these was always a packet of lozenges, with

two clean handkerchiefs, one white, one black-bordered, and her collection money—everything ready for the Sabbath. In making her preparations she had a sense of deep satisfaction, and she looked forward to the Day with holy expectation.

"Good night!" she would say, with a little sigh. "I hope it'll be a good morning, and let us to the Church."

If she came to us with resentment in her mind because Gertrude was not Scottish, she fell soon before the goodness of my English bride and gave her a sure place in her heart. Marguerite and Ronald prepared the way, no doubt, but Gertrude made her own road to that proud citadel. Her brightness and cheerfulness, her sunny-hearted sympathy, her loving, affectionate manners, broke down the hindering thoughts, one by one, till grandma looked on her with a smile, and then went out to meet her, heart to heart.

Then, well pleased in my mind and proud of them both, I used to watch Gertrude and grandma, as Gertrude told stories to the children by the winter fire, packing their fancies with fairy tales and feeding their hearts with pure and gallant thoughts, as she had packed the hearts and fancies of her own young brothers on the lead roof of the old Buckinghamshire manse. Grandma used to listen and follow as eagerly as any child, on the alert for the cue, excited at every dramatic turn, smiling, weeping, holding her breath, like Marguerite and Ronald, at the rise and fall of the heroes and heroines. Sometimes, with a look or smile to me, Gertrude would lead up to a steep bit made specially for grandma, and grandma would listen, puzzled a little to begin with, see through the plot, smile, wait her turn to the finish, and then smile to me:

"Oh sirse the day! She's an awfu' lassie that!"

But she was very proud of her all the same, and would follow her from room to room whenever the story was to be told, and would not have missed a chapter of Gertrude's stories for the best dinner of the year—no, not even for roast lamb and mint sauce, her sweetest, best-loved dish.

If she was fond of hearing stories, she could, in turn, tell the tales of her own life with wonderful skill. She possessed an extraordinary memory for detail and marvellous power of graphic speech. Among our happiest memories is the sight of her sitting on the lawn, or round by the hawthorn hedge, on warm summer days, playing with the children, telling stories to Gertrude and Dorothy, or singing one of her favourite songs. She was fond of telling about her boys, her big family of eight boys, one living daughter, and one little girl (the first) who had died in early childhood. Though

threescore years and ten, she never forgot her little dead Marion. Never forgot, too, Andrew and Charles, sons who had died in boyhood. "Those two were the bonniest," she used to say. "Father said so, too." And "the bonniest" they remained till the end. She would tell with great glee how she bought a kilt for her eldest—kilt, sporran, stockings, shoes, Glengarry cap, everything "just right"; and she knew to a halfpenny what she had given for them, after all the sorrows and troubles of the intervening years.

Proud of her children, she was prouder still of her husband, and used to tell of his "ways," brave and humorous, with special joy. By the hills of their happiest years, the waters of the Kyles lapping her memory, her young children playing about her feet, she loved to paint him best. He was a great reader, with a fine manly mellow voice, capable of deep and strong expression and of ten-

der feeling, and he was very fond (she would tell with pride) of reading to her, in the winter evenings, a chapter from Scott, a poem from Burns, a tale of William Wallace or Robert Bruce, half a Prophet or Gospel at a single sitting. He was a man of faith, and she used to tell, with fear and pride, how he went to a man lying (dying, they thought) with smallpox, and, with hammer and chisel, picked a window out of the dark walls of his room to let in the fresh air. She did not want him to go, but he went, and the man lived. "He had a grand faith, father," she used to say—"father" being the name by which she spoke of him always to her children. More thrilling still, was her story of how he rowed her over the Kyles one wintry stormy night, a child at her breast. They had been to take communion at church, and the storm came on while they prayed. To get home, she must

needs cross the narrow Kyles, and the waters were foaming. Again and again, she thought the boat must go over, and she clung with fear to her child. But he rowed them safely home. "Ay, he had a grand faith, father."

In her lighter moments, she would laugh and tell how "father" had a big eye, "an awfu' big eye." And she would make you laugh with her till the tears came, as she told how, one day, he brought home a cart of cocoanuts, another day three barrels of apples, and yet another day a whole cheddar cheese, forty pounds weight, that lasted them a whole winter long. Such "times" the boys had with the cocoanuts and apples! However, they "managed them"! But, "Oh sirse the day, the cheese!" and she left you to infer that every man, woman, and child among them, even the man with the big eye, could not manage that.

Her pleasantest story, however, and

one that gave her great relief, was the story of how "father" tried to "drown" his dog, sorely against his will. He would not shoot it, or chloroform it, or send it to sleep in any way, but would "drown" it—and I fancy, always, he knew what he was doing. With heavy heart, he took "Jim" to the water, tied a rope round the dog's neck, and a stone to that, then flung him in, and turned and ran, that he might not see his dog drown. "But, oh sirse the day," said grandma, "when he got home, here was the dog sitting waiting for him on the doorstep! And, when father saw him, there was no happier man in all the town that day!"

Always after these stories, while yet the smiles were on her face, she would turn round and say, "Here I am laughing an' I ought to be crying"—thinking, no doubt, of the sorrows that had intervened.

The happiest moments of all, perhaps,

were when she sang to us. In her courting days she used to sing in the church choir, and her voice was clear and sweet still. In those early days she and her future "father" used to sing duets together, and it was the music of one of these that haunted her threescore years and ten. It was only in her happiest moments that she could be persuaded to let us hear her sing, and it always took a good many smiles, a little wise praise, and a bit of coaxing before she would begin. Then, with clear, sweet voice, sure of her way and safe with her notes, she would sing:

"Hark! the goddess Diana
Calls out to the chase,"

the favourite duet of her courting days.

Grandma was happy then, and we drank with her of her joy. But my fondest picture of her, and one to which I come back again and again, is the sight of her in the sunlit path round by the

RED, RED ROSE

hawthorn hedge, walking up and down,
peacefully, slowly, slowly, a bit of mint
between her fingers, or a red rose
in her hand.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

OLD FAMILIAR FACES

Being a number of cameos or thumb-nail sketches descriptive of the men and women around My Garden, with notes on the traits and humours of country folk, their characteristics and foibles, kindnesses and sorrows.

THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES

" Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother,
Why wert thou not born in my father's dwelling?
So might we talk of the old familiar faces.

How some they have died, and some they have
left me,
And some are taken from me; all are departed;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces."

CHARLES LAMB.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN
OLD FAMILIAR FACES

IN THE TINY VILLAGE where My Garden lies, and in the farmsteads and hamlets round, were not a few men and women of marked individuality and human force. I should like to paint for you a series of cameos or draw for you a number of thumb-nail sketches descriptive of a few of them, noting for you their traits and humours, their characteristics and foibles, their kindnesses and sorrows. If grandma were by my side she could guide my hand, or paint them for you better than I, for she knew them one by one, and, with a faculty for judgment that never erred, could hit them off, truly and well. Sitting by the window, or on the lawn pleating the hem of her handkerchief (a little habit she had), she watched them come and go, and summed them up, one by one, with unfailing skill. "He's a weel-daein' man that," she would say of

one, or "A canny lad that," or "Watch that one: I wouldna trust him far," or "Puir lassie! She'll have to be careful," or "Oh sirse the day, she's a cheery body that!" She took special interest in the love-making of the village, and, when Dick Mason passed round a bag of sweets at the choir practice once, and Dorothy came home and told her all about it, she was as excited as if she were a girl again singing in the church choir and had a sweet offered her. Not anything escaped her, and everything that concerned the characters of the men and women round, young and old, rich and poor, was of huge interest to her. But grandma is not here, and I must do the best I can.

Let me begin with the women, taking them more or less at random. They wore, all of them, the picturesque white cotton bonnet of the English peasantry, all the week round, except Sunday, and sweet

and clean they always looked. We had no "poor," as the townsman counts "poor," in the village, and no dirty, untidy women in all the hamlets round. It was a pleasure to see them in their clean cottages, or to meet them standing at their garden gates, or to watch them wending their way to church. The oldest among them had most character, and it is these I fain would sketch. Such was old Mrs Moore. She had seen many sorrows, was racked with rheumatism, and so could not see the sunny side of life. When you called on her or spoke with her at the garden gate, you were sure to hear of her aches and sorrows, even if you were a little child. One day, Marguerite and Ronald called, and she told them all her woes in such a pitiful voice that Marguerite thought her life must be hard and not worth living.

"Come," she said to Ronald, "let's kneel down and ask Big Father to take

Mrs Moore to heaven!"

"No, no, my dear. Don't do that!" cried Mrs Moore, and hurried them to the door in fear, lest the prayer of a little child might effect her deliverance!*

Another day, when they called with something for her comfort, they found her lecturing her cat.

"Who stole my chop?" she kept asking the poor thief, till the poor cat hung its head in shame and looked a picture of misery. It did not hear the last of

* This is almost as good as a story I heard once from a Regent's Park orator. He was an Irishman and told it of an Irish bishop. The bishop was always preaching of heaven. Wherever he went he spoke of its beauty and its glory. Then he fell ill, and men thought he was going to die. A great doctor was called in. Said he: "In a month you'll be in heaven—unless you go to the South of France." "What do you think," said the Irish orator, with a twinkle in his eye, "now he had a chance of seeing the glory of heaven? No sooner had the doctor gone than he rang for his butler, and said, 'John, pack up my bag, for I'm off to the South of France!'"

that chop for many a week; and the tale of its loss was loud and long.

Such, also, was dear old Mrs Porter, one of the sunniest, brightest, best, despite her ninety years. Never a grumble or complaint did you hear from her, but always a little song of gratitude, a lowly "Thank you," or a kindly word of praise. Her goodness and her sweetness were like a fragrance and her quietness an inspiration. A woman of few words, round-shouldered, kindly-eyed, fourscore years and ten had chastened her and given mellowness and sweetness to her life. "God has been good to me," she would say, on the rare occasions she named The Name. The children were fond of her, and, whenever the maids were out together, she came to mind them.

"You bring a chair, Mrs Porter," Ronald would say to her in his tenderest tones, "and sit by me. I'm sure mother wouldn't mind!"

And, when she had sat with him a long time:

"Stop a little longer, Mrs Porter. I'm sure mother wouldn't mind!" She loved Ronald and his simple affectionate ways, and would always tell you afterwards the kind things he said to her. Then the smiles on her face would smooth the wrinkles of a thousand days and show you that her heart was young.

The cottagers were keen on their gardens. The men looked after the kitchen garden and allotment, while the women attended to the front garden and flowers. The rivalry among the women was keen. Mrs Taylor was famed for her chrysanthemums, and would scarcely part with a cutting for love or money: so eager was she to have the best show. Her cottage, too, was her pride. It was as clean as clean could be, and, when she washed the floor she would cover it with newspapers and make her husband step

on the newspaper: woe betide him, too, if he dared to put his feet on the fender. She would order them off, spread another newspaper, and say, "There! You dare to put your feet on the fender."

Even more masterful in this way was Mrs Joshua Aldington. She worked in the fields all day and "put her house to rights" at night. She liked elbow-room, and, when Joshua ventured to light his pipe and sit by his own fireside, she would take his cap and say to him, the broom in her hand: "Here, take your cap, and go, man," and show him to the door. Yet, she was the very incarnation of good nature, and one of the cheeriest women you ever met. She had been married twice, and, when Gertrude first came and heard some call her "Mrs Parry" and some "Mrs Aldington," she was in a fix which to call her. "Oh," said the good-natured soul, laughing, "it doesn't matter. Call me which you like!" She was stout and

well-built, as well as kind-looking and pleasant, and she had two sons, Caleb and Joshua. They were as merry and cheerful as herself, and had no need to seek a land "flowing with milk and honey"; they were in one. But, when the broom was in their mother's hand, they, too, had to "take their caps and go."

There seemed a fondness for scriptural names in the district—a fondness I could never fathom. What do you think of Mrs Elijah Porter for a name? She used to live in The Waste and then in the Old Turnpike, and she acted the part well by preaching to Elijah himself. "She praiches an' praiches at me," he said to me once, "an' reads to me! There's no stoppin' her!" This was when they were old, and the chariot was already on its way to fetch them. A prolific pair they were. Twenty-one children had Mrs Elijah Porter. And you never saw one of them dirty or her house untidy.

Yet her husband had never more than thirteen shillings a week, and her children never more than the things they stood up in. When they went to bed, she washed and dried and ironed their things, and had them ready for them clean next morning. Brave little woman that she was, she never saw bed, for years, till two or three in the morning! When I remembered that, I forgave her her "praiching," and Elijah his arithmetic achievement.*

A picture of sunshine was old Mrs Reeves, down by Huband's orchard. She was almost blind and doubled with infirmity, but she greeted you always with a smile. Men who read, and taught

* She was not related to old Mrs Porter already named. It was in her house, in The Waste, the minister once had a strange experience. He was conducting a cottage meeting and preaching on "Manna from Heaven," when the room became very hot and a "jowl" of bacon on the rafters melted and fell on his shoulder. He claimed it as "manna," but Mrs Elijah would not let it go.

others, learned at her feet, and women who opened their hearts to the sunshine came to her for light. She was radiantly happy in spite of her blindness, and a perpetual benediction in spite of her pain. Only when she thought of her little blind girl, dead forty years, did the sunlight leave her face. She talked of her to the end, and showed you, with tenderness, her blind child's doll, in a glass case, in her living-room. Forty years dead, and she never saw the doll but she saw her little blind girl playing with it at her feet

Of different types were old Mrs Aldington (no relation to Mrs Joshua), who lived till she was ninety-nine: her one memory was that she had danced with the old Marquis when she was a girl; Miss Huband, the village dressmaker, a virgin of unknown years, who advertised in a local print that ladies might come to her and obtain "the latest London fashions"; Polly Hemming, who

was said to be a witch and of good family, but was really not quite right in her head: she was the terror of young girls, and would dance round them with wild glowing eyes "like a witch"—she laid her hands on Gertrude once and made her blood run cold; Mrs Gould, who had the strangest names for physical troubles you ever heard ("poomony," "interjection," "poosy," for pneumonia, indigestion, and pleurisy—"Heerd tell o' that?" she would ask after every narrative, "Heerd tell o' that?"), and had the loveliest set of old pewter (a complete set) on a fine old oak dresser, worth its weight in silver; Betsy Gray, whose pride it was to dress the best corpse in the parish: it was a great honour to be asked to dress a corpse, and there was great rivalry in dressing them, but it was generally acknowledged no one could dress a corpse like Betsy—"she made it look just beautiful"; and Mrs Dee, who was as

deaf as a post, bedridden near to death, yet wanted to know all that was going on, and had the misfortune to have the hardest neighbour in all the country-side. The neighbour's pig-sty was being whitewashed. Mrs Dee knew that something was going on, and wanted to know what. So she knocked and called till the neighbour came. "You lie still," said her angry neighbour, "and think of the things as you do know!" and never a word of her pig, or her sty, or her whitewash, would she tell her. "No! You so near heaven and wanting, wanting to know! Lie still, and think of the things as you do know!" A harder fate than this for woman I cannot imagine.

I have kept the most important to the last. There can be no doubt that of all the women in the village the two most influential were Mrs Williams, the schoolmistress, and Nurse Winnett, the

midwife. Mrs Williams was a little lady, not five feet high, the wife of a fine big handsome carpenter and the mother of a family, yet she taught the village children for a whole generation and left her mark deep on many a child's life. Quiet, thoughtful, kind, she was as clever as she was tactful, and led many a little man and woman to the gateways of knowledge. Nurse Winnett had a big family of her own and never was in bed more than three days with any one of them. On the third day she rose, and washed and dressed her own child, and was proud of the fact. She kept one of the cleanest houses and one of the finest gardens in the countryside, and won more than one prize for this proud honour. It was in the fated room, however, that she was at her best. No one asked for a doctor when they had Nurse Winnett, and no one was more keen on her work than she. Her joy in bringing a child into the world was fit to wake the

smiles of the soberest "dad," and her professional rivalry was great. 'There's for you, now,' she would say with delight when she had washed and dressed the child, and turned it over on her knee; 'there's for you!' patting its soft places with glee. She was not only good at her work but good to her patients, and as considerate as clever. 'There's for you, now,' she would say, as she tucked them up, or got them a cup of tea in the middle of the night, or turned out the lamp to send them to sleep. 'There's for you,' as she placed the warm child softly in the mother's arms. Never was a woman prouder of her task than Nurse Winnett.

Among the men were many of pronounced character, but I can only sketch a few. Henry Harrison, the postman, was a humorist as well as a wag, and a bit of a satirist too. "That be Government," he would say, if Ronald ventured to touch his post-bag; "that be Government,"

and give you a wink as big as a horse. "Government" to him was the name of all power. "He be no Colonel," he would say with a laugh of a local celebrity, "not o' the reg'lar army. He be only in the 'Trouser Boys.'" The "Trouser Boys" were the militia. Henry's understudy, Pill, brought the bags from our post-town, and suffered from the defects of his name. "'Ope," said an illiterate mayor, presenting him with a prize once, "'ope you'll never need none o' em, Mister Pill!"

Old Edwin was our weather prophet. He was "a poor old critter," infirm, and unable to work, but certainly was weather-wise. He would stand by the door of his thatched cottage, and look away over his hawthorn hedge, and give you a good idea of the coming weather any day you liked to ask him. He remembered the weather and seasons for nearly sixty years, and could tell you the summers they had rain or frost or heat

or snow or blight from the time he was a boy. The year they had snow at Whitsuntide was a great memory: he would talk by the hour of the snow lying three inches deep that June, and every orchard and garden being dressed in white. Inside his cottage, hanging on the wall, was one of the old gut male and female weather-clocks common in that countryside. "When the old man comes out, it be all right," said Old Edwin. "But, when the old woman comes out, look out for squalls!"

Not weather-wise but learned in many things was old George Smart. He was an immaculate gardener. Never a weed could you find anywhere in his garden. He would offer you a penny if you could find one, well knowing his penny was safe. Once a gardener to the Marquis, he was now gardener to my old friend Mr Stamford Hill. He was a good man as well as a good gardener, and kept his

life as trim as his garden. In one branch of literature he was supreme. He had read all the books on the Lost Tribes he could find, and firmly believed that England was composed of the Ten Lost Tribes! "Because of this," he declared, "the Almighty had made England great! And because of this He would never let England fall!" All the powers of the Continent might batter at our seagirt walls, but we were safe. "England be the lost ten Ten Tribes! They can't touch us!"

Old John Quiney, a labourer who lived in the cottage next to My Garden, was a character too. When a young man, he was the handsomest man in all the countryside; and though he had spoiled his beauty by his life, he still kept a handsome heart. It was so tender that he could not bear to hear a child cry. When Marguerite or Ronald woke up from their sleep under the apple-tree, Old John would come through the holly

hedge into our garden, and knock at the back door till Gertrude or Dorothy came. "The babbie's a-cryin', mum!" he would say, and never go back by the holly hedge till "the babbie" was quiet. Near the end he had a slight stroke in his right hand, and came in to have it bathed by the minister and a student. The minister plunged it into a hot bath, and kept pouring in hotter water till the feeling of the hand came back. "By gum, it's hot!" said Old John, looking up with a smile. The student collapsed.

Beside these were William Howlett, "Dod's Dad" the children called him, Dorothy's father: he had the earliest potatoes of any man in the parish, and treated his family to a digging every Whitsunday, be it late or be it early—how he managed it was the envy of the countryside; Henry Moore, the biggest man in the village and the picture of health, but a martyr to stomach trouble,

and often off his work ill; Mr Jackson, the wheelwright and undertaker, a superior man, who made his coffins in an open shop in the sight of every passer-by: the first time I saw him at it I felt my flesh grow cold, but came to look on it as one of the sights of the village; Mr Mason, the blacksmith, a little man, as unlike the smith of the village song as you could think: his muscles were not "strong as iron bands" or his arms "brawny," but he loved children, and they came to his "open door" and watched him at the "flaming forge," and heard the bellows "roar," and caught the "burning sparks" that flew "like chaff from a threshing-floor."

Above these in station, but kin in their humanity, were my two good friends, Mr Stamford Hill, from London, and Mr Raymond Fordham, of Fordham Hall. Mr Hill's coming to the village was like a wind of joy. He could not

bear the woe and whine of life, and was for ever proclaiming its happiness and joy. He had a favourite motto that he kept repeating, again and again:

"The inner side of every cloud is bright and shining;
I therefore turn my clouds about,
And always wear them inside out,
To show the lining!"

Mr Raymond Fordham is, I am sure, one of the best men ever born. He is kindness personified and love incarnate. Every Sunday afternoon, for years, he went to see any of his labourers who were sick, and never came away without leaving something for their cheer. Every Sunday morning he went to church, and never left without—a sleep! He would look at the minister kindly, and let him get started, and then "go off." The minister used to say to him, with a friendly laugh, "You just wait long enough to see that I'm on the right lines, quite

sound, and then—you have mercy upon me!" Whatever the minister was, "sound" or no, certainly scarce a Sunday passed in church without his friend Mr Fordham being "quite sound."

These were the men and women who gave me pleasure, give me pleasure still. There were others, many noble, and some of whom I do not care to write, many who lived the simple life that has little to record, some who were the product of their own cramped thought and narrow sphere—boys who stood with open mouths at the village post; girls who had forgotten and come home; young men who were dense; old men, who should have known better, who came staggering home most Sunday nights taking more of the road than was their share; women who were fussy and foolish; men who were bigoted knights thinking their own little altar only the home of the Highest, and treating with high disdain

men of simpler faith and kinder blood. I pass them by—with high disdain—and write only of the nobler souls who came to the gate and looked, with kindly eyes, on My Garden of the Red, Red Rose.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE UNFOLDING OF TWO WHITE SOULS IN MY GARDEN OF THE RED, RED ROSE

A description of the growth of Marguerite and Ronald, the unfolding of their budding life, their love of the garden and of Big Father's House, and some of their childish doings and fancies in My Garden of the Red, Red Rose.

"Their lips were four red Roses on a stalk,
Which in their Summer beauty kissed each other."

SHAKESPEARE.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN THE UNFOLDING OF TWO WHITE SOULS IN MY GARDEN OF THE RED, RED ROSE

THEY LOVED EACH other well. Their hands were still joined together, and they grew to hold each other in honour. They ran together, played together, gardened together, and came to think, Ronald that there was no one in the world like Marguerite, Marguerite that there was no one in the world like Ronald. I had many flowers in My Garden, and I watched their unfolding with joy, but Marguerite and Ronald were my finest, and I watched their unfolding with pride. Walking with Gertrude in the garden or playing with the children on the lawn, we watched the growth of their bodies, the unfolding of their minds, and marked their childish doings and fancies with untold

joy. I noted some of them in a book at the time, and so am not writing from memory or creating fiction. I failed to note many, and feel that of their childish sayings more are beyond recall than I write now, and think this must be the experience of most thoughtful parents. I have not the remotest idea whether their unfolding was in any way abnormal, but I fancy that life is so rich that the sayings and doings of Marguerite and Ronald could be matched by ten thousand fathers from the lives of their children.

> "Their lips were four red Roses on a stalk,
> Which in their Summer beauty kissed each other."

And I fain would have the kiss of beauty on every line I write, here and now.

When they grow up they are going to be a father and mother, and have children of their own. Ronald is to be Mar-

guerite's "father" and Marguerite Ronald's "mother." They will have a house of their own, a garden of their own, children of their own, maids of their own, and all the rest of it. And (good little souls) Gertrude and I will be there, too. This generally holds good, and pleases both of them immensely. But one day Marguerite would not have it so.

"You'll be my 'mother' when I'm a big man, Marguerite, and I'll marry you," said Ronald.

"No, I won't," said Marguerite, rather grumpily and unexpectedly.

"Oh, very well," said Gertrude, "I'll help Ronald to get a 'mother,' if you won't marry him."

"Well," said Marguerite, relenting, not at all pleased with the idea of losing Ronald or of any other marrying him, "I'll marry him, mother, if he'll be a minister!"

From which you will see that they

were very human, loved each other well, loved gardens and children too, and thought much of the minister.

Few things please them better than to play at being the "Weeny Baby." Ronald is in a fix often whether to be a big boy or a big man "like father" or mother's teeny, weeny baby. For days at a time the teeny, weeny baby wins the day. Last thing at night and first thing in the morning he is a weeny baby "just sent down." He comes into mother's bed in the morning, and begins:

"I'm a weeny baby, mother."

"Oh, are you, Ronald?"

"Yes, just sent down."

"Who brought you?"

"The angels."

"And did they kiss you, baby?"

"No!"

"Did God, baby?"

"Yes, God kissed me!"

At night when he is safely tucked in

bed, he will have Gertrude go on with the game.

"Wee, wee, wee!" he will sing, to start her.

"Oh, weeny baby," she must say, surprised.

"Who are you?" he asks, looking up at her blankly. "Are you God?"

"No!" says mother, astonished.

"God comes and kisses the weeny babies," he says, to prompt her.

"Oh," says mother, preferring to wait.

"Who are you, then?" he presses.

"I'm your mother," she answers. "The angel has just fetched you down!"

"Oh," he replies, as if he understood and loved her already. "Then you can kiss me, mother, *instead of God!*"

Ronald is "learning" the piano, and sometimes "betends" that he can play, and yet he will have it that he is the weeny baby.

"Who taught you, baby?" asks mother.

"The angels taught me," answers Ronald. "And God listens!"

In such a mood the greatest punishment you could offer him, almost heart-breaking, is not to let him be a weeny baby.

In the summer, especially, we have many tramps or "travellers" on our road. They are, for the most part, very ragged and not very clean. Gertrude and I are sorry for them, though we cannot help them much. If they are truly hungry, we give them something to eat and drink, lest we turn from our door the Christ Himself. And if there be any little children with them, they receive a greater welcome. Marguerite and Ronald know this, and would like to be kind to them, but are a bit afraid of them—as well they may be, for some of them are enough to frighten God Himself. They are outcast of men, and, somehow, Marguerite came to think of them as outcast, also, of God.

"There will be a lot of people in Big Father's House, mother," she said, one day; "white babies, and brown babies, and black babies." (This was a great concession, a generous declaration, for Marguerite did not like black babies.) "But, there won't be any 'travellers' there, mother, will there?"

"Yes," says mother, "I think so!"

"But, they're so dirty," says Marguerite.

"Yet, God loves them," says mother, "and they were once all weeny and good."

"Oh, no," answers Marguerite. "They can have a house for themselves, one of the cottages on the Evesham Road, with a garden, and stay there all the time!"

"But, what when they come to die?" I put in, eager to hear the last.

"Give them," said Marguerite, thinking of the flowers in My Garden that were thirsty with the long drought and

rose to life again with the rain, "Give them some water to drink, father, and they won't die."

A fine solution this for the ills that are, and the ills men fear to be.

They are greatly interested in the moon. In the autumn, they go to bed "before the moon comes out." When it is getting near the time, there is much peeping out of the window to see if the moon has come out. There was great surprise and fear, one night, when they found it peeping through the staircase window at them on their way up to bed. They hastened to bed in case the moon would tell Big Father they were not asleep. All little boys and girls should be in bed before the moon comes out. If the moon sees them out of bed it will tell Big Father, and He will be angry with them. One day, Ronald was slow, and mother told him the moon would see him, and ask:

FRED
TAYLOR

"Why is that little boy not in bed yet?"

"But, I won't look at the moon," answered he, "and then the moon won't see me!"

In turn, the moon itself must play the game, and not be out in the day. It may peep through the windows only at night. To tell of them in the day would be unfair. The tables are turned then. And, if the moon come out, they can tell Big Father of it. It should be in bed, asleep. One day, at high noon, Ronald saw it in its first quarter.

"There's the moon!" he cried, quite excited. "It should be in bed! But" (relenting), "don't tell, mother. *It's a little one!*"

All nature is alive to them. It can speak. Every living thing has a voice for them. Gertrude and I often tell them what the birds say, and the bunnies, and the moon.

"Look at that nice little boy," a wee bird sang. "He's so good and obedient his father is taking him for a ride on his bikah all the way to Evesham! Isn't he a good little boy?"

And Ronald played up to the song, and was such a good little boy for days.

"Else father wouldn't take me to Evesham on his bikah! And the little dickies wouldn't say, 'Look at that nice little boy!'"

Every living creature they loved, and it was round the lives and tragedies of living things Ronald made his first ventures into "literature." Here is his first dramatic story: I took it down at the time, word for word.

"There was a favah-rabbit eating grass along the Evesham Road. And a ugly, ugly man came along, and hided himself behind a big, big tree. And the favah-rabbit ran into his little house. And when it thought he wasn't looking,

the favah-rabbit came out and eated some more grass. And the ugly man went *bang*, and shooted the favah-rabbit. And the muvvah-rabbit cried!"

Here, also, is Ronald's first poem, written some time afterwards. In it the same love of the living thing, its pathos, and its comfort, are apparent, as well as the underlying possibilities of pain. I give it as he wrote it.

RONALD'S FIRST POEM

THE PRIMROSE

"Hiding away far in a wood,
Under the leafy trees,
A little yellow primrose stood,
Fanned by the evening breeze.

'Oh dear, how lonely it is in this wood!
Look at the birds, how freely they fly,
Oh, if only I could go
Up in the blue, blue sky!

Or, if I could sit on a tree and sing,
Like the beautiful birds above me,
I should be as happy as a king,
If I had someone to love me!'"

To have someone to love him is the need of Ronald's life. Without that he is wretched. With that he is "as happy as a king."

Not far from My Garden of the Red, Red Rose is what they call Big Father's House. Here the people of that country-side come on Sunday to worship the Highest. Marguerite and Ronald do not know what that means in the way grown up people take it, but they love God and hold Him in friendly awe, and worship Him in their own beautiful way. They take great interest in all they see and hear, in the men and women who bend their heads in prayer, and in the details of the service. Next to the people, their greatest delight is in the singing, the readings, and the collection. They do not know many words, and cannot sing in tune yet, but, when the organ plays and the people stand, they must be lifted to their feet to add their meed of praise. It

would be a pity to silence the first rude notes of their eternal song. And, if the little tongue wanders sometimes and sings songs not common to the sanctuary, what then? The Big Father surely understands. If the hymn be well known, great is their joy. For sheer joy of living and lusty love of song you should hear Ronald singing:

> "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,
> Gratefully adoring our songs shall rise to Thee."

These are all the words he knows, and he sings them over and over till the people sit down and the organ dies away.

Often, however, the hymn is beyond them. Then Marguerite listens and feels for the words after the people, joining them a sentence or two behind. But Ronald falls back on the rich repertoire of the nursery, and sings away at one of his favourites to his heart's content. It cannot be said to be altogether solemnis-

ing to hear him singing by your side

"Sleep, my darling,
And take your rest,"

or

"Tom, Tom the Piper's son,"

while the congregation is singing

"Where streams of living water flow
My ransomed soul He leadeth,
And where the verdant pastures grow
With food celestial feedeth."

It is at such times, too, that his mind turns naturally from the details of the diet of worship to the details of the diet of home.

"Muvver, fot shall I have for dinner, to-day?" he whispers.

"Hush, Ronald."

"Shall I have macaloni or rhubarb, muvver?" Macaroni and rhubarb are his chief delights.

When the minister opens the Book they are often eager to hear the story.

They must have Bibles "like father," and point with satisfaction to the place, though they cannot read a word yet.

"Is he going to read about the poorly gentleman, muvver?" Marguerite asks.

The "poorly gentleman" is St Paul.

"He said 'Broken Body,' muvver," said Ronald, one communion day.

The minister always has a special service on communion day, and the burden of the Broken Body enters his prayers.

"He's said it again, muvver!"

"Hush, Ronald," says mother.

But, all during that week, the thought of the Broken Body lay in their little minds.

"Why did he say 'Broken Body,' muvver? Will he say it again?"

Next Sunday they were on the alert to hear if the minister would say it again, and were greatly disappointed because he did not. But the wonder and awe of the Broken Body took possession of their

minds and led to sacramental joy. Let me tell you of it. Next day Gertrude crept up to Ronald's room to see if he had waked from his mid-day sleep. When she opened the door she found him awake. He was sitting up in bed, with the white slip of his pillow off; and this was spread over the pillow on his knee, like the white communion cloth over the table.

"Hush, mother!" he said, as she entered. "It's the Broken Body!"

The great event of Big Father's House is the collection. Mr Harry brings the plate, and gives Marguerite a smile as she puts her penny in. He smiles on Ronald, too, but Ronald is too much awed by the importance of the event to return it always. He is such a little boy that, sometimes, he does not want to part with his penny, and the interest is mostly over for him when he drops it into the plate. This is why he slips out so readily before the

sermon. The collection gives them food for thought and has led to more than one difference.

"Mr Harry gives me a smile when he comes for the pennies," said Ronald.

"No, he doesn't," cried Marguerite, her face red with anger for the first time. "It's me he gives the smile to!"

Mr Harry generally gets their penny, but they came to the conclusion, once, that he was having too many, and Marguerite, with her lofty sense of justice, determined what they would do. Mr Raymond collected at the other end of the pew, and, when the great event happened next Sunday, Marguerite announced their decision.

"We won't give it to Mr Harry this time," she said. "We'll give it to Mr Raymond, muvver."

And, for many Sundays, Mr Raymond had it.

One Sunday it happened that Ger-

trude had no pennies, and gave Ronald a halfpenny for the plate.

"This isn't a penny, muvver," he whispered loudly, and blushed.

"It's a nice little one, Ronald," said mother, coaxingly.

"It's only a baby-penny," he answered, the tears in his eyes.

The humiliation and shame of so small an offering were so much for his generous heart that he could not be quieted till an exchange was made, and Gertrude herself was obliged to make the humble offering to the Lord. In such generous impulses is the hope of life, and in such lowly memories the chastening of years to come.

Big Father, their beautiful name for God, has two houses. One is not a stone-throw from My Garden of the Red, Red Rose, the other is beyond the sky. Sometimes they wish they were already up in heaven: they have no fear of it, and do

not yet know what it means to go. They enjoy themselves thinking what they will do in heaven.

"I think I'll make some trees first," smiles Ronald, "and then a snowdrop!"

"Oh, I know what I'll do," says Marguerite, with a mother's heart.

"And so do I," says mother.

"Nurse one of the weeny babies," blushes Marguerite.

But their concern is mostly with Big Father's House near our garden. They have gone to it from earliest days. They take the greatest interest in all its affairs, in the people as they assemble, in the places where their friends sit, in their little companions from the neighbouring houses, and in the minister.

They think of God as very kind and gentle. You do not know when He is near, but He comes near and touches you. How they put this, has always seemed to me very beautiful. "You do not feel

Him," they say, "for God has a soft hand!" He comes and touches men, fathers and mothers, boys and girls, weeny babies, pigeons, and dicky birds with His "soft hand"! They do not feel Him, His hand is so soft, but He guides them and the birds—and keeps them from danger. They think of God, too, as wishing them always to be good and wanting them "back" some day. The angels told Ronald to be good, and gave him some flowers, and said to him, when he came down:

"Be good, and you'll come back some day." And God kissed him, and said:

"Be good, Ronald, and I'll send the angels to fetch you back one day."

So he has told us, again and again. And, one day, he was not good. Marguerite looked at him thoughtfully, and wondered what the angels would be saying and what would happen if Ronald did not grow up good.

"Mother would cry. And father would cry. And his little angel in heaven would cry. And," said Marguerite, "*poor God would break His heart!*"

In the garden they are as happy as children can be, among the roses and flowers, by the swing under the greengage tree, and by the lavender beds round by the sunlit path. And, it is in connection with the garden that their best story grew—the story I think I love best. I have told you Marguerite's birthday is just two days after "Jesus Christ's birthday." They get a lot of Christmas and birthday presents one way or another, and are themselves very generous in their giving. One Christmas they thought of God and Jesus Christ, and wondered if they got any presents. And Marguerite said:

"One day, when I was by myself, muvver, having my little rest, I said, 'I'll take Jesus Christ a present, when I go

up to the sky.' And, I think, I'll take one to God too!"

When she heard the story of Mary anointing the feet of Christ with her sweet-smelling spikenard, she was much impressed.

"I know, muvver," she said. "When I go up to the sky, I'll take Him *a bunch of lavender!* He'll like that, won't He? It smells so nice! And, if He does not know how to make it smell nice, I'll show Him how to rub it! And then He'll smell how nice it is!"

A "bunch of lavender" for Jesus Christ!

What could be sweeter?

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE GARDEN OF GOD & OTHER DREAMS OF THE CHILD-MIND

The flowers that grow in God's Garden, and the problems that leap from a child's brain; how beautiful they are; how wonderful they grow!

"There eternal summer dwells,
And West winds with musky wing,
About the cedarn alleys fling
Nard and cassia's balmy smells;
Iris there with humid bow
Waters the odorous banks, that blow
Flowers of more mingled hue
Than her purfled scarf can shew,
And drenches with Elysian dew
(List, mortals, if your ears be true)
Beds of Hyacinth and Roses."

MILTON.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN
THE GARDEN OF GOD AND OTHER DREAMS OF THE CHILD - MIND

IN BIG FATHER'S HOUSE beyond the sky there is a garden. There eternal summer dwells, and there the babies are kept before they are "sent down." It was there that Marguerite and Ronald were before they "came down." There are ever so many kinds of babies in God's garden, and, ever so many kinds of flowers, roses, hyacinths, tulips, lilies, poppies, all kinds. There are babies corresponding to every shade and kind of flower. Rosy Baby lives in a bed of roses, Lily Baby in a bed of white lilies, and Poppy in a bed of pink poppies. There are all colours and tones of roses, and babies to match; and all kinds of lilies, big and small, white and yellow; and all sorts of poppies, Iceland and Oriental, red, white, pink and yellow,

and babies of every sort to match. Marguerite and Ronald often think of them, and know what a happy time they have among the flowers in God's garden. They like, also, to speak of themselves and the time they were in the garden.

"Where was I then, muvver?" smiles Marguerite. "Among marguerites?"

"Yes!" answers mother.

"And where was I," breaks in Ronald, "when I was a weeny baby? Among Ronalds, muvver?"

"Among the thistle-down," smiles mother.

The angels of heaven look after the babies in God's garden, and Marguerite and Ronald often wish they were there to help. They have a great idea of helping, and a fine thought of what they can do. Ronald is going to write father's books for him, "up in de 'tudy," when he is a man; and Marguerite is going to do all sorts of things about the house

when she is big. And they fancy that little boys and girls up in Big Father's House can help God too. Little Griff, who went up when he was only three, is helping God. He was their friend, and they smile when they think of him and of all he can do.

"Perhaps he runs and tells the stars to come out," they suggest.

"Stars! God says you may come out!"

And the stars come out.

Or, the primroses.

"Primroses! God says you may come out!"

And the primroses come out.

Or, the violets.

"Violets! God says you may come out!"

And the violets come out.

They envy Little Griff often. It is such a fine thing to work for God.

They wonder how things are made and how God makes the weeny babies.

GARDEN OF THE

God made everything, they think, even Ronald's stuffed monkey. For they can't take it that anything worth making was made by anyone other than God, and Ronald loves his stuffed monkey and thinks of it always as a living thing.

"But, who made God, muvver?" asked Ronald one day.

"Oh, no one made God!" answered she.

Ronald opened his eyes on that wonder, and came with the mystery to father.

"Who made God, father?" he asked.

Father rubbed his brow and answered:

"I don't know. . . . No one, Ronald!"

And father and child together gazed into the dark.

"God was, before anything was made," put in mother, trying to help him.

"Before the trees, mother?"

"Yes."

"Before the flowers?"

"Yes."

"Before the wind?"

"Yes."

It was altogether too wonderful. And Ronald gave it up.

A few days afterwards, the "making" idea still in his brain, he startled Gertrude by saying:

"Muvver, I wish God was just making me!"

"Ah, I know," said mother; "you want to see how God made you."

"No," said Ronald, "I couldn't see myself being made, but, when God had just made me, I could see Him making other weeny babies!"

For God was always busy, they thought, making babies, and getting them ready to be "sent down."

They often look up into the sky and wonder where the door is into heaven. One day Marguerite saw a bird flying high in the air.

"It is looking for the door into Big

Father's House, Ronald," she said, "to ask Him if He wants anything else done!"

The lovely beeches opposite the garden, on the Evesham Road, seem very high to them. They "nearly touch the sky" and look like "the way in." Ronald said:

"I'll get a ladder, father, and climb to the top of the trees one day, and then I'll be able to see the way in!"

If the way in be difficult, the way out seems quite as baffling. They believe God looks down and sees boys and girls and smiles on every happy and joyous thing in the world. But how He can do it is a problem that baffles them. It's a long way up to heaven, and the clouds and sky cannot be seen through.

"I know," says Ronald; "He makes a little window and looks through that!"

Sometimes in the garden you might have seen them looking up and scanning

every bit of the sky. They were looking for the little window in the garden of God.

The problem continued to baffle them, as it baffles many older and wiser, but they solved it, so far as they were concerned, in a very pretty way. Whenever they had anything they wanted Him specially to see, they carried it to the window or into the garden, and held it up for God to see. Marguerite had a box of crayons given her which were a great delight to her. She loves beautiful colours, and she wanted God to share her joy. She spoke of it several times to Gertrude, and nothing would do but she must show it to God, too. So, one night, after she had said her prayers, she came in her nightdress to the nursery window, holding up her box of crayons.

"Look, Big Father!" she cried. "They're such lovely colours! Aren't they?"

The angels in heaven can put out

their hands and touch the clouds. They can even touch the trees sometimes, and they are continually coming down from God's garden to our garden, and doing a great many things. Marguerite found a wounded swallow one day, its wing badly broken and bleeding. She lifted it, and made it a bed of grass and flowers in a little basket. Gertrude dressed it, and did her best for it, but it died. In the hall we have an old nest with two thrush's eggs in it, that we found forsaken in the holly hedge one day, and here, with the thrush's eggs, Marguerite laid the dead swallow. The same day, Ronald found a young sparrow that had fallen from its nest under the eaves of the House of God. It was warm, but dead. And he brought the young sparrow and laid its warm body beside the cold swallow—for the angels to come and fetch! For, they are not able to separate body and spirit, and

think the angels come for the body as well as the soul. They waited all that day, and part of next, and still the bodies lay in the old nest in the hall.

"Perhaps," they said, "the angels don't know where they are."

And they persuaded father to bury them in the garden, and put up a stick to show the angels where they were. In the dusk of a summer evening father performed the holy task.

Next morning, forgetting their request, their eyes caught the empty nest in the hall.

"Mother," they cried, excitedly, "the angels have come and taken the little dicky birdies up into the sky!"

But father took them and showed them the stick on the little birds' grave. And, somehow, they were quite content, for the angels would be sure to come to the garden and take the little dicky birdies up into Big Father's sky.

So great, indeed, was the power of the angels, that a controversy arose between them as to who knew most, God or the angels. Marguerite declared for the angels (look below for the reason) and Ronald stood up for God. The controversy became hot, and Ronald came to mother with awe on his face.

"Marguerite says the angels know more than God, muvver! They don't, do they? God knows most!"

"Yes," said mother, "God knows most!"

Next morning, at breakfast, the problem appeared again.

"I told Marguerite, muvver," said Ronald."

"I don't think so, muvver," said Marguerite.

"Why?"

"Because the angels look after the weeny babies, mother, *and bring them down.* So they must know most!"

"No," said mother, "no angel knows more than God!"

"Well, muvver," said Marguerite, holding on to her reason, "Jesus Christ knows more than God, doesn't He?"

"No, Marguerite," said mother, "no one knows more than God!"

"No, no, muvver," said Marguerite, "*Jesus Christ came down!*"

And it was clear that, to her mind, the Man who comes down knows more than the God who stays in His heaven.

They are never very clear about the difference between God and Jesus Christ, and are not troubled with theological distinctions. They cannot agree, either, that they should be treated alike.

"God's the best," says Ronald.

And Marguerite agrees with him.

Why, is not very clear; but, I think, the supremacy of God in their judgment is due really to this — God "makes the weeny babies" and "sends them down."

He does "most work." Though Jesus Christ, according to Marguerite, knows most, she admits He "only came down once," whereas God "has been working all the time." He has "more to do" than Jesus Christ, for He is God. So, "God's the best."

Whether this be true or no, they give to Jesus Christ, withal, the biggest compliment of their kind hearts. God "makes the weeny babies" and the angels "look after them," they declare, but what when the angels "bring them down"? Who looks after them, then? Marguerite, with her wise, motherly soul, sees a possible deficiency of angels, and abhors the idea of any little baby crying in God's garden with no one to help it; and Jesus Christ can always be fallen back on as the Kind Gentleman who comes and helps.

"I know," says Marguerite, solving the problem, "Jesus Christ is the Kind Gentleman, and, if any weeny baby cries,

He comes and plays with it!"

A "Kind Gentleman," indeed.

The fairies as well as the angels, and the old Greek gods as well as Jesus Christ are subjects of great interest to them. The fairies help the angels paint the flowers, and the brownies are up to all sorts of tricks in the woods and fields. Old Father Magpie, a kind of guardian-angel of the fairies, gives them perpetual joy. He is so merry and larkish that they never tire hearing of his frolics or imitating his ways. He gives the fairies and the brownies feasts of iced dewdrops and honey cakes and scented waters in lovely crimson rooms, on tables with gold leaves, served by fairies and brownies ravishingly beautiful, and on cups and plates made of lilies and rose leaves and all lovely things. Ronald longed to be a brownie "just for one day" that he might laugh and play with Old Father Magpie. But Marguerite preferred to be a fairy,

and ride in a gold carriage made of gold beech leaves, drawn by a dozen golden grasshoppers and driven by a great big handsome dragon-fly. The brownies, the fairies, and angels were real to them, and it seemed all as natural and reasonable, this world of make-believe, as the world we dwell in now.

There are many problems nearer home that start in their little brains. Chief among these is the problem of God and the stinging nettles. It arose, one day, when I brought them back from a walk we often took across the fields.

"Father knocked down a lot of stinging nettles for Ronald at the stile, muvver," said Marguerite. "Why does God put stinging nettles at the stile, muvver, just where little boys want to climb?"

"Oh, God sends them to make medicine for poorly people," answered Gertrude, "and, perhaps, a father bird came and took some of the stinging nettle

seed to carry home to one of its little baby-birds, and dropped it at the stile. Do you see?"

"Yes, but God shouldn't let stinging nettles grow at the stile, muvver, should He? Not where little boys just want to climb, should He? We don't want to make medicine of them, do we, muvver?"

What is this but the problem that has tormented their elders from before the time of Job, the problem of pain, and limitation, and blocked pathways, in the form of a parable, God and the stinging nettles?

The old Marquis is a great man in the estimation of Ronald. He lives in the Hall, in a great Park, beyond the garden in the woods. We seldom see him in the course of our walks, but, one day, we met him almost at the Park gates. Ronald stood and looked at him well. A little further on, we met Charlie Benton, a farmer's man about the same

height and build. Said Ronald:

"If the head of the Marquis was cut off and stuck on Charlie, would he be the Marquis?"

That is amusing enough, but a funnier head story still I must tell. It is evident that many questions lie a long time in their minds before they come to speech. What subtle workings repress or liberate them it would be hard to say. Their good friend, Mr Stamford Hill, they had seen many a time, and he had not puzzled them in the least. They liked his cheerfulness and his kindness, and counted him one of their friends. Yet, one day, in church, the slumbering question woke, in earnest.

"Muvver!" whispered Ronald loudly, "why has Mr Hill no hair on the top of his head?"

"Hush, Ronald!" answered mother, blushing, and afraid Mr Hill would hear. He sat only three or four seats in front.

"But, why hasn't he, muvver?" Ronald asked eagerly.

"You must be quiet, Ronald!" said mother.

And Ronald was quiet.

But the question was too interesting to be left, and, after church and lunch, the great discovery was announced to Marguerite.

"Marguerite, Mr Hill has no hair on the top of his head."

"You naughty boy, Ronald. He has!" answered Marguerite. She is already the champion of her friends.

"He hasn't, Marguerite," he replied, most assuringly and funnily.

"He has, Ronald," Marguerite answered, unbelievingly, but weakening a bit.

"Has he, muvver?" questioned Ronald, carrying the great matter to the high court of mother's wisdom.

"No!" said mother.

And the great fact was established in their minds, for ever.

Marguerite and Ronald stared at each other hard, convinced, but baffled. It was a great problem, this of the bald head, and the wonder of it entered their souls.

Later that afternoon, when they were playing "angels" on the lawn, Marguerite flew to Big Father's House, and brought a sweet weeny baby.

"Muvver, here's a sweet weeny baby Big Father's just sent down. It's such a weeny, weeny baby, muvver, and it's got no hair on its head, just like Mr Hill!"

And later still, in the nursery, at bedtime, the question worked its way to sure solution.

"Dorothy, do you know why Mr Hill has no hair on the top of his head?"

Dorothy did her best to contain herself.

"No!" she did not know.

"Well, I'll tell you, Dorothy," said Marguerite. "He's just like Bluebell (Bluebell was her dear old wax doll with scant golden hair that became more and more scant every time she brushed it), *he's brushed it all off!*"

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

PREPARING FOR "LITTLE GERTRUDE," OR HOW THE LITTLE ANGEL BROTHER CAME TO THE GARDEN OF THE RED, RED ROSE

A description of the expectations of two little children for "a little sister," their exploits in the garden among the flowers as they fold their hands and make request, with other incidents of his coming.

THREE FLOWERS

"On my ripely rounded Rose-tree,
Dreaming of life are three flowers:
One pusheth up her ruby Rose-cup,
For the rain of God's quickening showers,
With a magical burst of beauty; one glows
Dewily dear in the sheen of love;
And one pretty softling, one baby-bud Rose,
Lies tenderly shut in the green of love."

GERALD MASSEY.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN
PREPARING FOR "LITTLE GERTRUDE," OR HOW THE LITTLE ANGEL BROTHER CAME TO THE GARDEN OF THE RED, RED ROSE

I CANNOT TELL WHEN they first began to indulge expectations. I have told you of their fondness for weeny babies, and I tell you now that they wished often we had one. They played at "angels" and "weeny baby" so long that they wished the games were real, and came home and asked me to get them "a little sister."

"A little baby, just like Winifred down at the Court, father."

And father patted them on the head, and said:

"Some day we may have a little baby."

Marguerite smiled for greatness of joy.

"Shall we, father?" asked Ronald, dancing about me as if it had already

come. His faith in his father's word is great.

"Yes, Ronald," said father. "And we'll call her 'Little Gertrude,' and ask Big Father to send her down soon!"

That was more than a year before the coming. And every night after that, when they finished their prayer and mother asked them if they wanted to ask anything else from Big Father, every night, I say, they folded their hands, and lifted up their faces, and said:

"Please, Big Father, send down Little Gertrude, for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen."

Once or twice in the garden, in the heat of a summer's day, when tired with the heat and weary with play, they lay at mother's feet and said, a little bit faint and weary-like:

"Muvver, Big Father doesn't send down Little Gertrude, does He? Why doesn't He send down Little Gertrude?"

And mother comforted them by saying:

"He won't forget, Marguerite. Big Father won't forget, Ronald. When the right time comes Little Gertrude is sure to come down!"

And they went away quite satisfied, and lifted up their face among the flowers in a shady part of the garden, and made request, with greater zeal, for Little Gertrude.

Sometimes, however, they think Big Father must be very busy, and have a lot to do, a great many prayers to answer and a great many babies to "send down," and so they feel they can excuse Him. Yet they go on asking, with no shadow of doubt, that one day He will send down Little Gertrude.

Once, when cycling to Exhall with me, on her little seat between my arms, Marguerite saw a house standing high on a hill.

"It nearly touches Big Father's House," she said. "If it went up just a little bit higher, it might be able to see Little Gertrude!"

And once when he saw the moon from my cycle, Ronald called out very loud:

"Moon! Tell Big Father to send down Little Gertrude!"

They consider a baby the most precious of all possessions, and they are very eager that Big Father should send one down to any friend or acquaintance who happens to be without one. The wish is the kindest and best in the world, and is ever a mark of true friendship, but sometimes it is very embarrassing. Thus, when Cousin Mary came to stay with us that summer, and won her love, Marguerite thought at once of the great possession.

"Have you a weeny baby, Cousin Mary?"

"No, Marguerite dear," Cousin Mary answered.

RED, RED ROSE

Cousin Mary has never had a weeny baby and carries in her heart the memory of a husband who is dead. But Marguerite knows nothing of the sorrows of death, and can only think of the loneliness of life without a baby. And so, she smiled on Cousin Mary and said:

"Would you like a weeny baby, Cousin Mary?"

"Oh yes, dear."

"Well, I'll ask Big Father to send you down one!" said Marguerite.

And, that night, when she had finished her prayer, and asked for Little Gertrude, she went on:

"And, please, Big Father, send down a weeny baby for Cousin Mary, for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen."

But it struck her next day, that, perhaps, Big Father would send down a little baby for Cousin Mary first, and she did not think that would be quite fair. For Marguerite had been asking

for Little Gertrude for many months, and thought we deserved the first that came down. And so, next night, when she said her prayer, she went on:

"Please, Big Father, send down Little Gertrude for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen. And, when you have sent down Little Gertrude, I've got another message for You, for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen."

And, every night, after that, she thought of Cousin Mary and her empty arms, and wanted her to have a baby. But, she never ventured further in her prayer than this:

" Please, Big Father, when you have sent down Little Gertrude, I've got another message for You!"

Ronald got his first green suit that summer, with his first pocket, and went round the village showing his pocket to everyone who had eyes to see. And when he had shown it proudly to Mrs Stamford Hill, she asked him, mother-like:

"And what have you done with your petticoats, Ronald?"

"Folded them up, and put them in a box for Little Gertrude!" he answered.

And mother's little secret was out!

"Get off! Get off!" Mrs Hill called to her from her trap, next time they met. "I must speak to you!"

Gertrude got off her cycle.

"And, what if it isn't 'Little Gertrude'?" asked Mrs Hill, laughing, yet with some concern. "The children will be so disappointed!"

Gertrude smiled.

But, that night, she thought she would prepare the children's way. So, when they had said their prayer, she said to them:

"What if Big Father sent us a brother instead of Little Gertrude?"

"Send him back!" cried Marguerite. "Tell the angels to take him back!"

It was an early autumn that year, with

many wet and weary days, and the dark, methinks, got into my soul. I was troubled with uncertainty, because of the children, and with fear, lest they should be disappointed. And, beneath all, was a certain undefined restlessness in my heart, and a moaning in my life like the sigh of the wind in the stubble fields or the sob of falling leaves. I see it, now, and understand it all, but my eyes were holden then and my feet were dark. It must have been for this reason that I sat down that dark autumn-tide and wrote my saddest poem. The beat of the black wings struck it, and the pain that was to be, yet I did not know. Here it is. You may judge for yourself.

FALLING LEAVES

I

"The leaves of the land are falling,
The green of the wood is gone,
The winter is calling, calling,
And the heart of the world is lone,

But, lo!
The gold of the autumn-pathway,
And the crimson of yesterday,
Are the price of the Lord of the Morning
To the spring that is far away,
For the wealth of the world's adorning
And the joy of a summer-day.
Then, go,
Leaves, go!

II

The leaves of our life are falling,
The smile of our face is gone,
The winter is calling, calling,
And the heart of my heart is lone,
But, lo!
The cut in the rain-swept pathway,
And the shroudlet of yesterday,
Are the price of the Lord of the Morning
To the spring that is far away,
For the joy of the land's adorning
And the wealth of a better day.
Then, go,
Leaves, go!"

All that autumn through I felt the throb of pain, and heard the moaning of the wind in my heart. All through the

dark, wet days I could not rid myself of my restlessness or free myself of my pain. No, not even when Marguerite and Ronald came and let me into one of their secrets. I smiled and laughed with them, but the wind was moaning in my heart all the time. The carriage, in which they were wheeled as babies, lay up at the top of the house, in the red spare-room. They seldom went up there, but, one day, they followed Gertrude up, and saw her put fresh lace on the carriage for Little Gertrude. They smiled when they saw it, and came and told me. And often they led me up, with a mixture of awe and expectation, to see the carriage. They smiled when they saw it, always, and whispered to each other, excitedly,

"It's for Little Gertrude, Ronald!"

"It's for Little Gertrude, Marguerite!"

And, once, greatly daring, Ronald climbed into the carriage, and lay down, and pretended he was Little Gertrude.

THEY WENT AWAY . . . AND MARIA RAISED
FOR LITTLE GERTRUDE

"Beeby, beeby!" he squeaked, with the voice of a little child. "Ma-ma! Da-da! Ta-ta! Wee-wee-wee!"

And Marguerite danced with joy.

My restlessness continued till Christmas, and made me come to their beds on Christmas Eve with the unknown fear in my heart. They were restless, too, that night, dreaming, and tossing about in their sleep. Call it what you will, I felt a stab at my heart as I watched them, and was forced to sit down and ask what it meant. Here is what came.

THE BAIRN

A POEM OF CHRISTMAS EVE

I

"What do they dream to-night, the bairns of our heart?
I think 'tis the music they hear, borne on the wind.
I dimly remember the days, long since depart,
When I heard it myself, 'fore I sinned.

Joyful and hopeful, they sleep, their arms
flung apart,
And list to the Song of the Angels,
'Hark, Dad, hark!
'Tis the song of the Bairn that they
sing—Hark!'

II

Why do they smile in their sleep, the
bairns of our heart?
I think 'tis the shepherds they see,
chased by the wind.
I often remember the days, long since
depart,
When I saw them myself, 'fore I sinned.
Smiling and loving, they dream, behold-
ing them part
From the host and the sheep on the hill.
'Oh, Dad, Dad,
'Tis the house of the Bairn that they
seek—Dad!'

III

Why are they troubled and tost, the bairns
of our heart?
I think 'tis the manger they see, kissed
of the wind.

I sadly remember the days, long since de-
part,
When I kissed it myself, 'fore I sinned.
Restless and waking, they dream, till, up,
swift, they start,
At the sound of the voice in the inn,
'Oh, Dad, Dad,
'Tis the voice of the Bairn that we hear
—Dad!'

IV

Why do they dream, to-night, the bairns
of our heart?
I think 'tis to bring us love, new-born
of God's wind.
I often remember the days, long since de-
part,
When I bore it myself, 'fore I sinned.
Joyful and hopeful, they rise, their heart's
door apart,
And list to the song of the Angels,
'Oh, hark, hark!
'Tis the song of the Bairn that they
sing—Hark!'"

The tremor at my heart continued, and would not rest, not even amid the festal joy of the Christmastide. Gertrude lean-

ed on my arm, the same sweet, kind, joyous, hopeful spirit that won my love, and my heart was tender towards her. I followed her about wherever she went, fearing lest some evil should befall her. I walked in the garden, and felt cold. I passed by the sweet-smelling shrubs and evergreens, but they failed to sing me their usual song of joy. I stood among my roses and by my beds of lavender, but their fragrance and bloom had gone. And there was no sign yet of springing life within.

When the New Year dawned, I could not help straining my eyes looking into the unknown. And, while I sat at my desk that day, I penned my trembling

ODE TO THE NEW YEAR

I

"Thou'rt young, to-day, O new-born year,
Though hundreds three and sixty-five
Thy days are numbered.
But, with what cumbered?

Or who can say what thou to us shalt give?
Or what thy feet shall swiftly usward
bear?

II

Thou'rt fair, to-day, O joyous year,
Fair is thy speech, and deft thy grace
Of benediction.
But, with what fiction
Wilt thou swift allure us? A lie t'our face
Wilt thou tell? Or mock and laugh at our
fear?

III

Kind art thou, too, O smiling year,
Kind is thy face, and sweet thy smile,
And glad thy greeting.
But, to what meeting
Wilt thou, in shelt'ring darkness us
beguile?
To trials, scars, defeat, or gladd'ning
cheer?

IV

And free thou art, O sinless year,
Free of all blight, and blame, and black
Foul taint of sorrow.
What of to-morrow?
Will its first hours our garments stain?
or slack

Our grip of Hope? Or high us heavenward
bear?

V

Yet, welcome, sinless smiling year,
Whate'er of joy or sorrow thou shalt give,
However cumbered.
Thy days are numbered,
And, safely past the milestones, sixty-five
And hundreds three, God His child will
bear!

We had not long to wait. Smiling and happy the day dawned, and the White Angel came to our home again.

And, soon as I saw the child, the fear in my heart lifted.

A lovely child, just like Marguerite, every feature perfect, sweet brow and nose and cheeks and chin, and every limb chiselled with perfect grace, in fairest symmetry, as if God had smiled at His task and shaped them for heaven's gladdening.

But, it was not Little Gertrude.

It was a—little angel brother.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

HOW THE LITTLE ANGEL BROTHER LEFT OUR GARDEN OF THE RED, RED ROSE

A chapter on the tragedy of the passing of a little child, with marks of the scars and wounds left behind, and some reflections on the withering of life's blossom.

"Wise the enamour'd Nightingale,
Wise the well-belovèd Rose!
Love and life shall still prevail,
Nor the silence at the close
Break the magic of the tale
In the telling—though it shows—
Who but knows
How it goes?—
Life a last year's Nightingale
Love a last year's Rose."

ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

XVII. HOW THE LITTLE ANGEL BROTHER LEFT OUR GARDEN OF THE RED, RED ROSE

WHEN THE CHILdren came down to see him, on the third day, Marguerite said: "Why didn't God send down Little Gertrude, muvver?"

And Ronald protested:

"This is Little Gertrude's brush, muvver!"

But, when baby kicked with his leg on nurse's lap, they screamed for joy, and cried:

"Do it again, baby! Do it again!"

And took him to their hearts right away.

They measured him. He was twenty-three inches.

They weighed him. He was ten pounds.

They kissed him. He was rosy and warm, perfect in every feature and perfect in every limb.

"Isn't he lovely?" said Marguerite.

And when nurse made her sit down in the big chair, and placed baby in her arms a minute, she glowed with joy and cried:

"Isn't he lovely, muvver? Isn't he? I think he's God's very best!"

That was the only time they saw him. I led them through the garden to the gate, and left them in the safe keeping of their second mother. But they never saw him again.

Next morning, Gertrude called me to her side, and said:

"Listen, Jamie! Listen to the baby's breathing!"

I listened.

It was very fast.

"Is it all right, Jamie? Do you think it's all right?" asked Gertrude.

I looked into her eyes.

They were anxious.

"Yes, I think so!" I said.

"No!" she answered. "The other two were not like this! There's something wrong!"

I listened again.

The breath of the baby came short and sharp, and very quick, like a dying creature panting for its life.

I became anxious too.

But I sought to hide it from her. For I knew it would break her heart.

I had to go out that afternoon, and, when I returned to the garden gate, I heard the baby crying. I ran through the garden and came to Gertrude's room. Her face was white, and her eyes startled and sure.

The baby had been crying for an hour, and could not be quieted. Nurse walked it up and down the room, patting it and hushing it as best she could. But it cried

the more, a loud, heart-breaking, piteous cry.

And its breath came shorter and sharper, and faster than before, like a creature in pain.

"You'd better go for the doctor, sir," said nurse. "I think you'd better."

And I ran the three miles to the doctor's faster than ever before.

When I came back, the good lady of Bevington Hall met me in the garden.

Her eyes were troubled. I think she understood.

"He's very ill!" she said. "I'll stay the night and see!"

"Thank you, Mrs Raymond," I said.

My heart was full.

I, also, understood.

The doctor came. He said little, but evaded my eye.

Gertrude was very ill. Her face was

anxious. Her eyes fearful. Every cry of the child was a stab at her heart.

"Better take him away from her!" said the doctor.

And they took him away from her.

And she never saw her baby again.

Till midnight I sat with Mrs Raymond, watching the little baby. He lay on her lap, by a glowing fire, in the living-room. His cry became a moan. His limbs became limp. His breath came shorter and sharper, and quicker than ever, like a creature nearing the end.

At midnight, the two women persuaded me to go and lie down a little.

"We'll knock you up, sir, if anything goes wrong!" said nurse.

And I went.

Kind souls, they did not want me to see the end.

I had not long lain down when I heard

a knocking on the wall.

I rose.

At the same moment, someone came tapping at my door.

I opened it.

"He's gone, sir!" said nurse, weeping. "Will you go and tell her, sir? I can't!"

And I left my room to go and tell her.

God knows it is the hardest journey I have ever travelled.

When I entered the room, she was sitting up in bed, alert. She had heard the knocking on the wall. She hears it still in her sleep. She will hear it till the end.

"What's the matter, Jamie?" she asked.

I took her in my arms, and laid her down in bed, and placed my cheek against hers. I could not bear to see her eyes.

"It's all right, Gertrude!" I said softly. "It's all right! Our little baby's gone!"

"Dead?" she cried, starting up in my arms again.

I could not speak.

I nodded my face against her cheek, and laid her down in bed again.

Her face was wet with tears. My heart was breaking.

She lay in my arms so quietly, I thought she was dead.

She wept so softly. I thanked God for her tears.

But I thought it would kill her.

"Oh, God, God!" I cried in my heart, "spare me my Gertrude!"

And wept with her.

Yet sought to wipe the tears from her face.

An hour I stayed with her, weeping with her, then patting her to rest like a child, and coaxing her to try and sleep.

My heart feared for her. My mind told me the truth. If we could not quieten

her and get her to rest, she, too, would fall on sleep for ever.

In an hour I left her, and went out to the healing dark. I wandered through My Garden, my face downwards, my eyes wet with tears. I came to the sunlit path: it was dark and hard and hopeless. I came to the rose beds: they were bare and desolate. I looked up: the stars were shining in a stormy sky. I looked round: there was nothing but the silence of Death and my naked garden. The heavens were unconcerned. The earth was unmoved. But my heart was weeping.

"Oh, God, God!" I cried, flinging myself in the dark against the wall where the red, red roses grow, "spare me, oh spare me Gertrude!"

And wept like a little child.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

OUR GARDEN OF SLEEP

A description of the garden where our little brother sleeps, and of the garden of quietness where we dream of him and rest, with a vision of the beauty and grace of the growing years.

"The rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth."

WORDSWORTH.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN
OUR GARDEN OF SLEEP

HE WAS ONLY WITH US four days. He came on the fifteenth and left on the nineteenth. Yet we have never forgotten him.

The child of our dreams, Death's untimely frost nipped him in the bud. A bit of tender blossom, the Black Angel smote him on our tree. And our hands were left among the withered leaves, our hearts bleak and bare. Yet we think of him fondly, always.

Perfect in every feature and perfect in every limb, he had one flaw. How it came the doctor could not tell. How it happens is one of the mysteries of Nature. It seems that there is in the human heart a little valve that begins to close whenever a child is born. Soon as it cries, Nature designs the valve to close, not suddenly, or all at once, but quietly, within a few days. If it will not close, then there is pain, struggle, and slam-

ming of the doors of death.

That was the trouble. Some slight flaw prevented the valve from closing. Some slip of Nature kept it from shutting. And there was nothing for it, for our "little baby," but sore fight and slamming of the doors of death.

We laid him to sleep in a garden two miles away, within sound of the quiet waters of the Avon. Loved of the master and sung by him in his great verse, it sings its low, sweet song, softly, softly, to our little angel brother, as it passes on its slow way to the sea.

When we laid him to sleep, Gertrude rested, and hope in my heart rose high. When deep sleep came on her, the birds began to sing. When her cheek was no longer moist, I faced the world with a smile. And when she came down, a month later, weak, but brave as ever, smitten,

but holding her face high for God's kiss, I knew that it was well.

Then I walked in My Garden, and watched the trees bud. I listened by the hawthorn hedge and heard the larks singing. I wandered up and down the sunlit path and felt the sun warming. I came to the wall where the red, red roses grow and found them swelling. And before many months had gone, almond blossom, and plum and apple and pear, were all over the garden, and summer had come again. And it seemed as if Nature had forgotten who was sleeping down in God's garden by the banks of the Avon.

But we never forgot.

He sleeps in the garden, but his spirit lives in Big Father's House. The children think of him always as there, with their little friend "Griff." They think of him often, and speak of him often. They know no fear. They feel no sor-

row. They understand it is well with him.

But they never forget.

When Christmas came once more, and they bought their presents, they were much concerned about their little angel brother, and wondered if they could not possibly send a present to him and Little Griff. Marguerite thought they could leave them in the garden somewhere, and, perhaps, Big Father would be so kind as to send an angel down for them. They think they would, if they were Big Father. Two toy pianos were the choice of their hearts. They were very fond of them. One belonged to Ronald, and one Marguerite was to get on her birthday, two days after Christmas. She liked it best of all her gifts, and she suggested that Ronald should send his to the little angel brother and that she should send hers to Little Griff.

"And when the angels sing, muvver, they will be able to play for them!"

RED, RED ROSE

When his first birthday came round, they felt that they must write him or send him something again. They thought of the garden once more, but could not settle on any plan. To get at him, very near to him, was their desire; and, somehow, an angel did not seem to bring them near enough this time. And they were baffled till they thought of God. Then they folded their hands by the lavender beds beyond the green-gage tree, and said:

"Please, Big Father, will You wish our little angel brother a very happy birthday, and tell him we often think of him? And Ronald often says he wishes he could go to heaven now, just this very minute, and then he would see him. For Jesus Christ's sake, Amen!"

"And tell Little Gertrude, too, Big Father," said Ronald, "that we often think of her, and wish her a very happy birthday!"

And, when the following Christmas came, he was still very much in their thoughts. Marguerite was beginning to write now, and nothing would satisfy her but she must write a letter to Jesus Christ Himself. She wrote it in church on Christmas Day. I write it now for you:

"DEAR JESUS CHRIST,—This is to wish You a very happy birthday. I hope You are quite well, and looking after our little angel brother. We only saw him once, just for a little while one day when we came down from Mrs Raymond's. Wasn't it a good thing we came down that day? We often think of him, and hope he is not too much trouble to You, for he was such a weeny baby, and couldn't walk, and could only wriggle in mother's arms. Good-bye. Ronald wishes You a very happy birthday, too, and many happy returns of the day.

"MARGUERITE."

No, we have not forgotten him. Only the other day, when Ronald was tired playing alone, he came to mother and said:

"Mother, how old would the little angel brother be if he'd been here?"

"Nine!" said Gertrude.

"Nine!" he echoed. "What a pity, mother! How nice he'd have been to play with!"

And all our hearts echoed,

"What a pity!"

Yet, the intervening years have brought their healing and help. And we are able to reflect now on the beauty and grace of his young life as well as on the withering of life's blossom. We are richer for his passing—and better for his dying. Not that we would have it so (for, if we could, we would call him back to play with us on the lawn or dig with us under the green-gage tree), but

his passing has been for our hallowing. And each succeeding year adds to our enrichment. For ever, we shall be the better for having had our little angel brother, though he stayed with us only four days.

Yesterday I walked in the garden at the cool of the day. The golden light of the setting sun was playing with the fruit on the trees, and the long-drawn shadows were falling at our feet. In the golden light Gertrude came to me, and put her hand in mine, and walked with me up and down the sunlit path. Hand in hand, we stood by the hawthorn hedge, and looked away across the Valley to the distant hills. Hand in hand, we came to the wall where the red, red roses grow, and I picked the reddest and pinned it on her breast. Hand in hand we walked, drinking in the fragrance and quietness of the garden, happy almost as of old.

OUR GARDEN OF SLEEP

RED, RED ROSE

"But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath passed away a glory
from the earth."

The Good God has willed it so. Yet wills it, too, that we should know the gladness of the garden again, and the fragrance of the Red, Red Rose.

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